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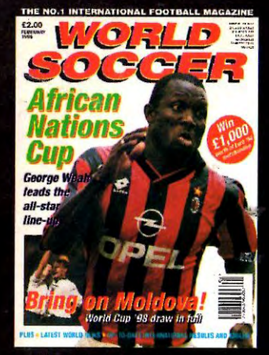
DUTCH DECIDER

December 13, 1995, Anfield, Liverpool. Teenager Patrick Kluivert's second goal seals Holland's place at the Euro '96 finals at the expense of the Republic of Ireland. For the Dutch the talk was of an exciting new chapter in their history, based upon European and World club champions Ajax. But for Jack Charlton, the defeat signalled the end of an era. Eight days later, and after 10 years as the Republic's manager, he announced his resignation.



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Editor KEIR RADNEDGE

Deputy Editor GAVIN HAMILTON

Design KEVIN COOK-FIELDING

Picture Editor DUNCAN BOND

Group Editor PAUL HAWKSBEE

Group Art Editor STAN MCDONALD

Editorial Secretary JUNE HISCOCK

Thanks this issue to: DAVID PROLE, JOHN KELLY

Editorial
TEL: 0171-261 5737
FAX: 0171-261 7474

Advertising Manager JULIAN CLARK

Publishing Director ANDY McDUFF

Publisher DAVID J. SMITH

Advertising
TEL: 0171-261 5702

Back Issues Department
TEL: 0181-503 0588

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ESM
EUROPEAN SPORTS MAGAZINES

Foreigners rule could go NOW

UEFA lawyers set out the options after Bosman case – Exclusive by Keir Radnedge

JUVENTUS, Real Madrid and the rest of the European elite may be able to field ALL their foreign players in the quarter-finals of the Champions League, the Cup-winners Cup and the UEFA Cup in March.

That could be the sensational outcome of UEFA's deliberations on the implications of the European Court of Justice's judgement in the Jean-Marc Bosman case.

A report from UEFA's legal experts will be presented to the executive committee at its meeting in Geneva on February 15. The report will review the verdict as it affects not only the transfer system but, more important in the short term, the declared illegality of the three-plus-two foreign player regulation.

One option facing UEFA would be to scrap the controversial three-plus-two regulation with immediate effect. A second option would be an appeal to the clubs' goodwill to stick by the spirit of the regulation for the remainder of this season while considering rule changes for next season.

UEFA decision-makers will meet amid an atmosphere of fragmentation and confusion. Some member nations – such as England – already have scrapped foreign player restrictions while some clubs – such as Compostela in Spain and Koln in Germany – are threatening to take the new law into their own hands and force the pace of change.

Simultaneously, FIFA also indulged in some sabre-rattling. An item in the December edition of *FIFA News* – whose policy pronouncements are controlled by general secretary Sepp Blatter – warned: "An international sports organisation simply cannot operate properly unless regulations are universally applied . . . such circumstances could even jeopardise the independent status of the 18 FIFA member associations concerned."

The implicit threat appears to be that the 18 states of the European Union may place themselves beyond FIFA if they embrace laws which set a significant administrative, commercial and fiscal chasm between themselves and the rest of the international game. Such a threat could backfire, of course, if the EU 18 should decide to go it alone and remove their financial and sporting heart from international competition up to and including the World Cup.

Such a scenario means that 1998 could be the last World Cup as we know it. But spokesman Keith Cooper considered such a disastrous outcome unlikely given that FIFA's role in the Bosman case is more that of interested observer than direct participant.

UEFA's position, of course, is very different given the European Commission's assertion that foreign player restrictions on EU nationals became illegal the moment the European Court's verdict was handed down on December 15.

A UEFA spokesman said: "Our interpretation was that the three-plus-two regulation was not affected because clubs compete in our competitions as representatives of their countries and this was a permitted exemption. However, the European Commission then said this interpretation was wrong. Our lawyers are studying the matter. Obviously, we cannot put our clubs in a position of operating outside the law."

The foreigner restrictions (a maximum of three foreign players plus two assimilated players in a match squad) feature in the European competition regulations to which all clubs agree before each season. But now the Bosman judgement appears to have rendered this clause illegal. Thus, clubs in EU countries may feel perfectly justified in refusing to be bound by them.

UEFA would then be at the mercy of the big clubs' goodwill to hold the three competitions together.

Some of the remaining 24 clubs in the three club tournaments are more seriously affected by the three-plus-two regulation than others. Real Madrid might welcome the opportunity to play, for example, Fernando Redondo (Argentina), Dejan Petkovic (Yugoslavia) and Ivan Zamorano (Chile) as their three foreign players alongside Denmark's Michael Laudrup, whose inclusion would be possible because he is a now-unregulated EU national.

Juventus could line up unrestricted EU nationals such as Didier Deschamps (France) and Paulo Sousa (Portugal) plus Vladimir Jugovic (Yugoslavia) and Juan Antonio Sorin (Argentina) and remain one player within a three-plus-two rule which would now hinder only non-EU nationals.

The options open to UEFA are few and none offers any guarantee of stability. As UEFA's spokesman pointed out: "Our decision is not merely concerned with the EU member countries but with the non-EU countries. Can we have one regulation for one group of countries and one law for another? We have to study also how the judgement may vary depending on which country a match is being played in and whether both or only one of the competing clubs is from an EU country. It is very, very complicated."

English and Scottish clubs welcomed the potential scrapping of the three-plus-two regulation because they believe this will offer unrestricted opportunities in the foreign transfer markets.

This may be an over-optimistic view. The giants of Italy, Spain and Germany will be similarly released to cash in.

'ALL TRANSFER FEES ARE DOOMED'

ALL transfer fees could soon be abolished in Germany, driving small clubs out of existence, according to Reinhard Rauball, a former Borussia Dortmund president who is a leading sports law expert and legal adviser to athlete Katrin Krabbe.

He says: "It is naive to believe that this decision will remain restricted to transfers to foreign clubs. It is only a matter of time before a German Bosman takes a case to a labour court and wins. Article 48 in the Treaty of Rome is basically identical to the German law on an employee's free choice of working place in the German constitution.

"Already it is possible for players to move within a country without a transfer fee being paid. All a player has to do is get 'parked' at a foreign club for a short time before being moved back into the country to join another club. Legally, it would be very difficult to stop short-term transfers abroad and free transfers back into the Bundesliga."

THE REBEL'S TIMETABLE

1982, July – Bosman, then 17, signs as a professional for Belgian top division club Standard Liege.
1988, May – Bosman signs a two-year contract with RFC Liege who pay Standard a fee of £65,000.
1990, June – RFC Liege offer Bosman a one-season contract, which he rejects. He is put on the transfer list with a 'formula' fee of 11,743,000 Belgian francs (about £255,000).
July – Bosman reaches agreement with US Dunkerque of France. Liege and Dunkerque agree a one-year loan agreement plus the fee for an option on a permanent transfer.
August – Liege doubt Dunkerque's ability to pay and refuse to submit the necessary international transfer clearance certificate for the Belgian Federation for send to the French Federation. Liege suspend Bosman – who then initiates legal proceedings.
November – A Belgian civil court frees Bosman to play for French Third Division team Saint Quentin.
1991, May – The Court of Appeal in Liege confirms verdict of lower court that Bosman can move freely to a new club. The Appeals Court then refers the case to the European Court of Justice for judgement under the Treaty of Rome.
June – Bosman ends his spell with St Quentin but qualifies for unemployment benefit in France.
1992, January – Joins St Denis on Reunion, the French island off Madagascar.
September – Returns to Belgium but is unable to find a new club and is not now entitled to unemployment benefit.
1993, May – Joins Belgian Third Division team Olympic Charleroi.
1994, May – Moves to Fourth Division team Vise, where he still plays at the age of 31.
1995, March – Belgium's highest court rejects new appeal by UEFA, the Belgian federation and RFC Liege.
June – The Court of Justice hears the Bosman submissions in Luxembourg. He requests 700,000 in damages from UEFA, the Belgian federation and RFC Liege.
September - Advocate-general Carl Otto Lenz advises the Court to rule that western Europe's system of transfers and limits on foreign players is illegal.
November – UEFA issues open letter, signed by the 49 presidents of European national associations, warning of dire consequences if the Court follows Lenz's advice. FIFA backs UEFA and expresses concern that a ruling in favour of Bosman would leave EU countries out of step with the rest of the world.
December 15 – The European Court rules in favour of Bosman. No appeal is possible.

THE JUDGEMENT

This a summary of the European Court of Justice's Judgement on the Compatibility of Football Federation Regulations with Community Law:

VERDICT: The rules on transfers of players and the limits on the numbers of Community players in inter-club matches are contrary to the Treaty of Rome.

I – OPERATIVE PART OF THE JUDGEMENT:

1, Article 48 of the EEC Treaty outlaws sporting association regulations which hinder the free movement of a professional player between Member States by the imposition of transfer, training or development fees;

2, Article 48 outlaws sporting association regulations which restrict the number of EU players any club may field;

3, Judgements in support of Article 48 cannot be applied retrospectively except in such cases as Bosman in which court action already had been undertaken.

II – FACTUAL AND LEGAL BACKGROUND:

A, reviewing football rules and regulations, including transfers and nationality restrictions including UEFA's three-plus-two rule applicable in European club competitions;

B, reviewing the facts of the Bosman complaint against his former club, RC Liege, and the Belgian federation and the decision of the Court of Appeal in Liege to refer the case to the European Court because it lacked international jurisdiction.

III – GROUNDS OF THE JUDGEMENT:

A, dismissing pleadings by UEFA and various European governments on the grounds that they had been submitted too late

B, reviewing European case law on transfer rules only in respect of players moving from one Member State to another and dismissing claims that a transfer system is essential to the financial health of professional football at lower levels "since the prospect of receiving fees is uncertain and the amount of any fee is unrelated to the actual costs borne".

C, reviewing foreign player restrictions in respect of EU nationals because a feature of Bosman's complaint was that such rules unfairly impeded his opportunities of obtaining employment in another Member State. Stating that "such restrictions can be accepted only for matches between national teams". Also, dismissing "the fact that the three-plus-two rule may have been negotiated with the Commission, as UEFA asserts," on the grounds that the Commission "does not have the power to authorise practices which are contrary to the Treaty of Rome".

BOSMAN'S VIEW

JEAN-MARC BOSMAN, whose fight against restraint of trade sparked the crisis, says:

"I expected to win my case but not so decisively. It was a total defeat for all my opponents. I feel proud I had the courage to do something no other player had the courage to try. I showed that football is not above the law.

"My lawyers were magnificent. Whenever I got discouraged they inpired me to carry on. I hope that in years to come other players will realise precisely how much I have done for them.

"As for arguments about a threat to players' jobs, then I say that, while the top players will always be taken by the top clubs, that still leaves hundreds of middle-ranking clubs looking for middle-ranking players. I am sure the average football player will now have greater freedom to build a career, not less.

"This judgement offers more opportunities for work for everyone. Until now we had a system which was not logical. It was archaic.

"As for the non-EU federations, they are not my problem. It's up to UEFA to sort them out. All I have done is to exercise my own personal right to work at my chosen profession.

"You know, if I had been allowed by Liege to join Dunkerque in the first place then I could still have been a top division player somewhere, today . . . "

Keir Radnedge COMMENTARY

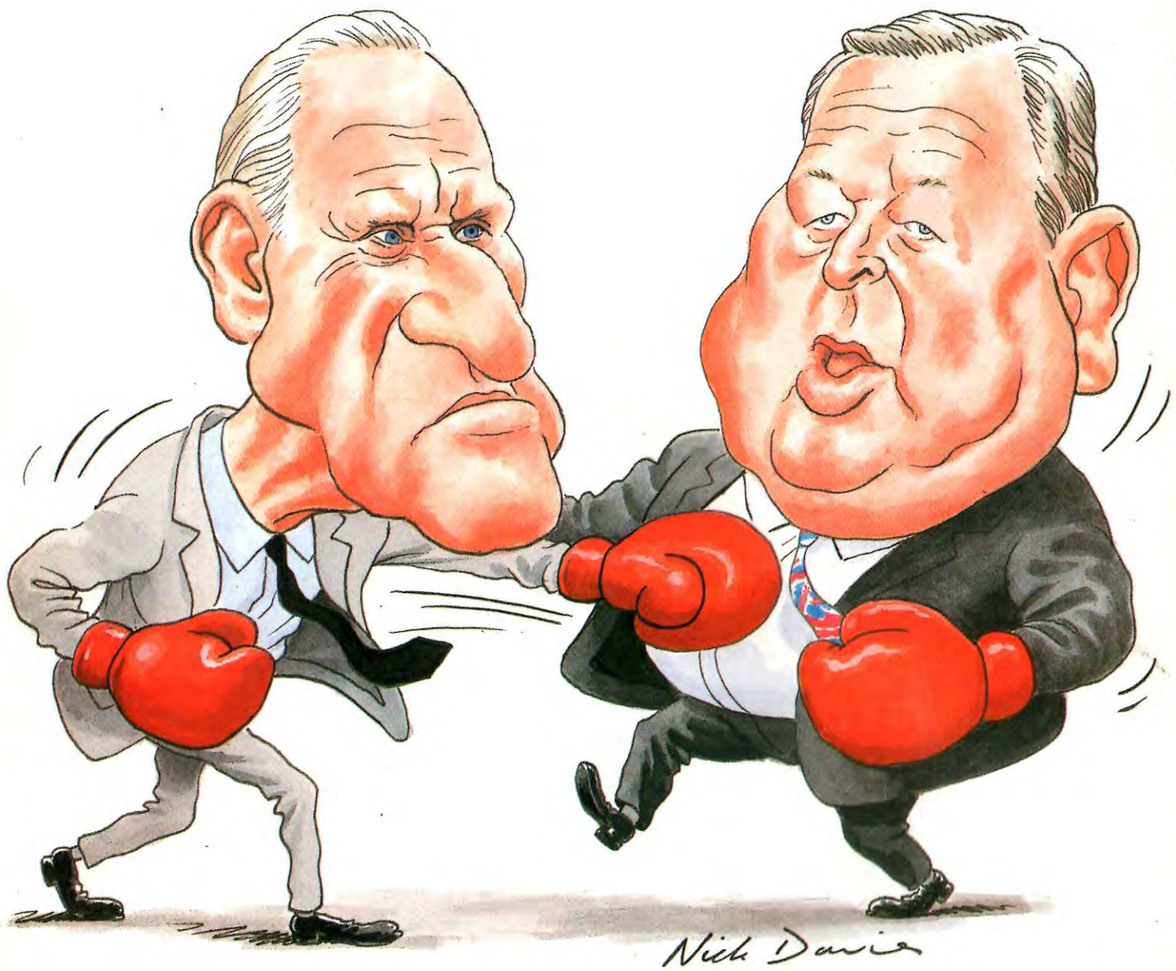


ILLUSTRATION NICK DAVIES

Lennart leads
. . . but for how long?

THE War for the FIFA Presidency continues unabated. Like two heavyweight boxers, reigning champion Joao Havelange and Swedish challenger Lennart Johansson (from the blue and yellow corner, of course) exchange their punches. All we're missing is Don King (he of the electric hair) to sort out the TV rights.

Johansson made the faster start, his opening flurry of punches carrying all the weight of financial and democratic commonsense. There was also more than a hint of some useful tactical preparation undertaken with African and even perhaps a little Asian guidance.

Havelange tried to rally with an African-inspired jab of his own. It backfired. His week-long trip to Nigeria to fete the dictators who were, simultaneously, killing human rights activists, was a serious misjudgment. The uppercut not merely missed its target but offered Johansson the opportunity to cuff Havelange round the ear for even trying.

So to round three in Paris and the champion suffered another blow to the body when FIFA's executive confirmed Malaysia and refused to back Havelange's bid to bring the next World Youth Cup back to Nigeria.

But Havelange has proved, in 22 undefeated years, that he is never more dangerous than when his opponents think they have him on the ropes.

The Nigerians provided the opportunity. Just 24 hours before the World Cup draw Havelange threatened to cancel the event if the French government did not grant entry visas to the Africans' delegation. The French protested that they were only obeying European Union policy but Havelange, unlike UEFA, considered the European Union of no account and told the French precisely that.

Result: the French government backed down and Havelange landed a major counter-punch against Johansson which would have looked enormously impressive to the watching African judges at the FIFA ringside.

The protagonists retired to their corners for the holiday break. But it was Havelange who came out fastest at the bell – striking a thunderous one-two by offering the 2006 World Cup to Africa in general and South Africa in particular.

This not only dangled a huge incentive for Africa to split away from a prospective alliance with Europe but ALSO raised two fingers to the German lobby which has both actively pursued the 2006 World Cup AND created the Vision proposals (for a FIFA revolution) which serve as Johansson's manifesto.

On the *WORLD SOCCER* scorecard so far it's two rounds to the champion and three to the challenger.

Seconds out . . . round six!

Flying in a fog

I WONDER if any other major industry would have received similar insulting, not to say idiotic, treatment from the European Commission in the wake of the delivery of the verdict in the Jean-Marc Bosman case.

The Bosman judgement, because it affects directly not the whole but only sectors of the football transfer industry, has created enormous confusion and problems of interpretation.

The European Court of Justice in Luxembourg, quite properly, supported Bosman in his case alleging restraint of trade by the former FC Liege club (which has since gone out of independent existence).

The court ruled that:

1) no fee is applicable to the transfers of players who are out of contract AND are moving from one country to another within the European Union; and

2) arbitrary restriction of players within a team line-up by nationality quotas is illegal AS FAR AS European Union nationals are concerned.

The true meaning of the small print and the implications of the judgement defied instant unravelling. Yet, this is what the European Commissioners apparently expected. One Padraig Flynn, social affairs commissioner, said: "The judgement has been delivered and takes immediate effect."

No chance of a period of reflection while lawyers worked out exactly what it DID mean.

For example, UEFA claimed that the three-and-two rule in use in its three European club competitions remained unaffected. The European Union disagreed. It is even suggested that the three-and-two rule holds for non-EU clubs and EU clubs competing against non-EU teams but NOT when one EU club faces another EU club.

I bet Joao Havelange has permitted himself the luxury of the ghost of a smile over UEFA confusion.

The more serious and urgent question is: Does the European Commission understand the verdict and the complexity of its ramifications?

Judging from the instant verdict of Padraig Flynn, apparently not. Obviously a man with no time for football. And after all Jack Charlton has done for his team!

No need for a Tsar

SIR BERT MILLICHIP's mandate as chairman of the Football Association will come to an end this summer. It's been suggested that the FA should take advantage of his impending departure to find some sort of entrepreneur president with a degree in business administration.

Like so many other criticisms of the FA, this is one which makes the age-old mistake of assuming that the vast majority of men and women, boys and girls playing and running the great game are paid to do so. They are not. The professionals who hog the headline-making limelight are a miniscule percentage of the FA's constituency.

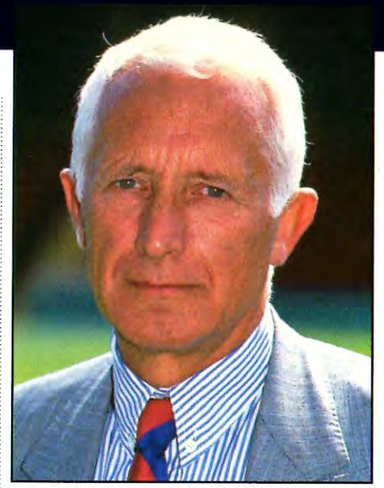
Now, holding the balance requires rare diplomatic skills. But some former tsar of industry would be about the least-qualified on that score.

JUST when you thought it was all quiet, so Sepp Blatter has produced another proposed fiddle with the laws of the game.

The International Board is ready, he has told the German magazine Stern, to enlarge the size of the goal to take effect after the 1998 World Cup.

Ken Ridden of the FA has confirmed that the matter is being reviewed by an IB sub-committee but says it hasn't yet met. And he should know because he is on it.

Sounds like another example of policy projection through the media. An unfortunate habit which continues to generate enormous resentment among members of the FIFA executive.



Nowhere men

RON NOADES, *(left)* **chairman of Crystal Palace, Robert Chase of Norwich and Ian Stott of Oldham Athletic each cut a sad figure at the recent Football League discussions.**

All three have known positions at the centre of professional football power – but power which faded as their clubs were relegated out of the Premier League.

They sought to build a new power base, it seems, through a breakaway Football League First Division but had it the wrong way round. You don't gain power by going away into a corner on your own. That doesn't produce votes.

If you want power in sport you need a base, a voting foundation. Messrs Noades, Chase and Stott will weigh much more with three divisions in their army rather than one.

George is best

AWARDS time is with us yet again. Gianluca Vialli won your own World Player of the Year accolade here, George Weah made history as the first African to become European Footballer of the Year and – having already won the African award – completed a hat-trick by collecting FIFA's World Footballer of the Year prize at a star-studded gala in Milan.

Originally such trinkets were handed down exclusively by journalists' organisations or by magazines and newspapers. But now football federations and even the international governing bodies are getting in on the act. They have realised that prizes and awards present them with opportunities for self-promotion and even more television exposure.

Take the African player award, for example. Originally it was bestowed by the African edition of the French weekly, *France Football*. When that section of the magazine was hived off it took the award with it – while *France Football* launched its own replacement. Then the African confederation jumped on the bandwagon as well so that, for three years, there were no fewer than three African Footballer of the Year awards.

This past year, however, France Football scrapped its own award and the confederation got in early so that the new African Footballer of the Year is Weah.

That opened up another debate about eligibility.

Though he was born in Liberia, for whom he plays his international football, Weah took up French citizenship three years ago – partly for passport convenience, partly to open up another 'foreigner' slot for his club at the time, Paris Saint-Germain. Furthermore, when Weah joined Milan this past summer he did so, formally, as a European Union citizen.

This was because Italian clubs (pre-Bosman) could field three foreigners in a league match but had to include at least one who was an EU citizen. Milan thus engaged a battery of lawyers to prove Weah's EU credentials so that his presence did not necessarily deny them the simultaneous use of Zvonimir Boban (Croatia, non-EU) and Dejan Savicevic (Yugoslavia, non-EU).

Even more confusing, Weah then collected the European Footballer of the Year award, too!

This is the longest-running international award and the most famous, having been launched – also by *France Football* – back in 1956 when Sir Stanley Matthews was the first winner. Ever since then, the rules have been strict. Potential winners had to play their international football for European countries. That let in two Argentinians in the early years – Alfredo Di Stefano (naturalised Spaniard and Spanish international) in 1957 and 1959 and Omar Sivori (naturalised Italian and Italian international) in 1961.

Later, in 1965, came Portuguese international Eusebio (born in Mozambique, then a Portuguese colony).

Ever since then, there were 'real' Europeans all the way. This past year, however, feeling perhaps that its award was being swamped, *France Football* relaunched its European award by throwing eligibility open to all players playing in Europe. Thus a South American or African player could become the European No 1 – and Weah completed his remarkable double.

He made it a hat-trick at the FIFA gala in Milan, which was hosted by FIFA with support from Adidas and European Sports Magazines, an association of nine top Europe-wide soccer publications, including *WORLD SOCCER*. Team-mates Paolo Maldini and Roberto Baggio were second and fourth, with Bayern Munich's Jurgen Klinsmann third.

The juries for all these awards vary. *France Football* uses its own country-by-country reporters to choose the European Footballer of the Year; the African confederation poll the African nations' federations; and FIFA summons votes from the national coaches of all 190 member countries.

Do they know any better than you, the fan?

EUROPEAN FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR

1	George Weah (Milan, Liberia)	144 votes
2	Jurgen Klinsmann (Bayern Munich, Germany)	108
3	Jari Litmanen (Ajax, Finland)	67
4	Alessandro Del Piero (Juventus, Italy)	57
5	Patrick Kluivert (Ajax, Holland)	47
6	Gianfranco Zola (Parma, Italy)	41
7	Paolo Maldini (Milan, Italy)	36
8	Marc Overmars (Ajax, Holland)	33
9	Matthias Sammer (Borussia Dortmund, Germany)	18
10	Michael Laudrup (Real Madrid, Denmark)	17

Libero

Libero

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Football Association of Ireland

The Association is seeking the services of a fully qualified **INTERNATIONAL TEAM MANAGER**

Applications in writing stating experience should be forwarded to:—

General Secretary,
The Football Association of Ireland
80 Merrion Square
Dublin 2,

before 31st December, 1985.

This *(right)* is the original advertisement, published in full, complete, whole, with nothing left out, in the *Irish Independent* in December 1985. It led to Jack Charlton's appointment as the Republic of Ireland's manager 10 years ago. Presumably, the FAI won't be approaching Kenny Dalglish in the same way . . .

FROM MOSCOW TO MILLWALL

FROM the Lions of Lisbon to the Lions of Deptford, Sergei Yuran ***(above)*** and Vasili Kulkov certainly like a challenge!

The two Russian internationals, who won championship medals in Portugal with Benfica and FC Porto, have turned their backs on Moscow Spartak's UEFA Champions League campaign, joining First Division Millwall on loan until the end of the season in a move described by Yuran as "the pinnacle of my career". Perhaps it lost something in the translation . . .

Shirt Tales

LEEDS & LIVERPOOL

LEEDS and Liverpool are joined by more than just a Victorian canal – both clubs owe their colours to the influence of Real Madrid.

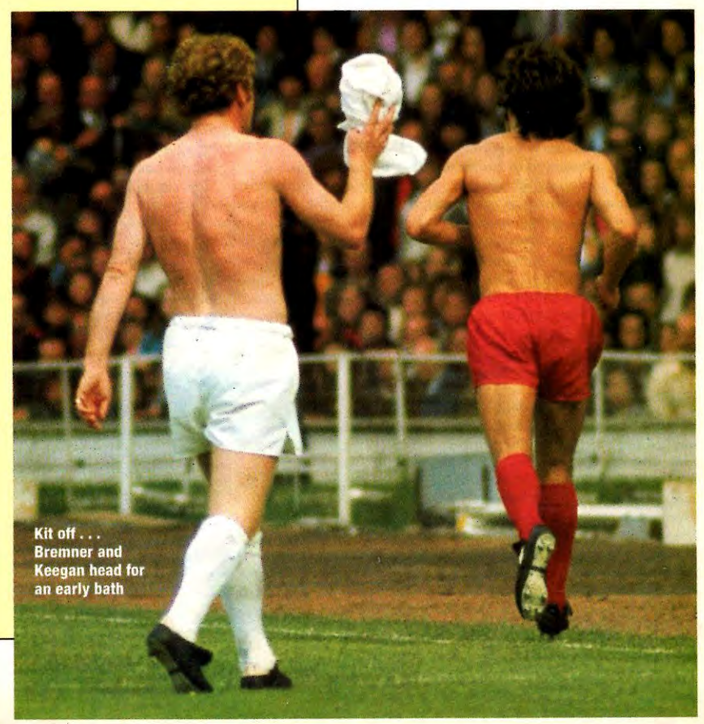
Liverpool used to play in red shirts with white shorts, but in the early 1960s manager Bill Shankly introduced an all-red strip, to make the players look more solid and intimidating to their opponents.

Shankly came up with the idea after seeing the great Real Madrid side, who played in all-white, and the idea of a one-colour kit certainly seemed to work as Liverpool went on to dominate England and Europe in the coming decades.

Similarly, Leeds changed their colours under the guidance of their legendary manager Don Revie, also a big fan of Real Madrid. Before 1961, Leeds played in a pretty dull strip of blue and old gold. Revie changed all that, going a step further than Shankly by directly copying Real's all-white strip.

Later cosmetic changes, such as numbered sock tabs which were thrown to the crowd as souvenirs at the end of matches, were short-lived, but Leeds still play in all-white today . . . a permanent reminder of Revie.

It's ironic, then, that one of the most famous photographs *(right)* of the two kits together features Kevin Keegan and Billy Bremner, minus their shirts after being sent off in the 1974 Charity Shield at Wembley.



Kit off . . . Bremner and Keegan head for an early bath

£OOTBALL £INANCIAL

European currency exchange

THE benefits of qualifying for Euro '96 already are being enjoyed by some players, most notably the Germans and Romanians.

The Romanian FA has awarded its national squad a £1.3million bonus just for qualifying, which works out at £55,000 per man (provided they played in 60 per cent of the qualifiers), while the Germans will collect £43,000 for winning the tournament; £32,000 for reaching the final, a semi-final place is worth £21,000, and a quarter-final spot £13,000 per man. Should the team be eliminated in the group matches, the players will get nothing.

The only international already certain of a £43,000 bonus is Jurgen Klinsmann, who alone played in all 10 qualifying games. Players will collect £4,300 for each game played. For the European Championships in 1992, with only six qualifying ties, every German was paid £3,000. The Romanians each received £80,000 for reaching the quarter-finals of USA '94.

Llp Service

"I was, I am and I always will be a drug addict." – *Diego Maradona, speaking as the Argentinian government launched an anti-drug campaign.*

"It's been like buying a big car and then not having the money to buy the petrol." – *Bobby Clark, who citied "financial constraints" within Soccer New Zealand as the reason for his resignation as national coach.*

"It's very hard for an African to make it in Europe. Look what happens when you get to be successful. People see a white man driving a Mercedes and they think he's some sort of successful businessman. When they see a black man driving a Mercedes, they think he's a drugs trafficker." – *African, European and World player of the year, George Weah.*

FAMOUS FOR 3.69 SECONDS

AUSSIE striker Damian Mori is claiming a world record after scoring a goal after only 3.69 seconds of an Australian National League match.

Adelaide City's Mori scored the fastest goal in the history of Australia's league, and possibly the joint quickest goal ever, when he sent a long-distance lob soaring over the Sydney United goalkeeper, John Perosh.

A spokesperson for Soccer Australia, which runs the National Soccer League, confirmed that Mori's goal was the fastest in NSL history. "It was just one of those things that come off once in a blue moon," Australian international Mori said.

Four players are listed in the *Guinness Book of Records* as scoring goals in six seconds in English football, but it is generally accepted that the quickest at senior level was four seconds by Jim Fryatt (who later became a croupier in Las Vegas) when playing for Bradford Park Avenue in 1964.

Despite having taken that remarkable lead, City did not win. United scrambled to a 2-2 draw.

SUSPENDED PLAYER SAYS BEER WAS SPIKED

SWEDISH player Jerry Mansson has been suspended for two years for a drugs offence, despite protesting that someone had spiked his beer in a Stockholm bar.

Mansson tested positive for an amphetamine in a routine check after a night game with his Second Division team Brommapojkarna.

He alleged that someone must have put the drug in his beer in a bar two nights earlier.

Badge Business

OH DEAR! Before America's new MLS has even started, one of the teams have run into trouble . . . over the design of their logo.

Washington's representatives in the new league, DC United, chose the obvious national emblem of the American eagle – atop a football – for their badge, but had to go back to the drawing board because their first attempt bore an unfortunate resemblance to the Nazi icons so common during World War Two.

The second version retains the eagle – now standing on three stars and footballs – but in a softer, more rounded form, which looks a lot friendlier than its sinister-looking predecessor.

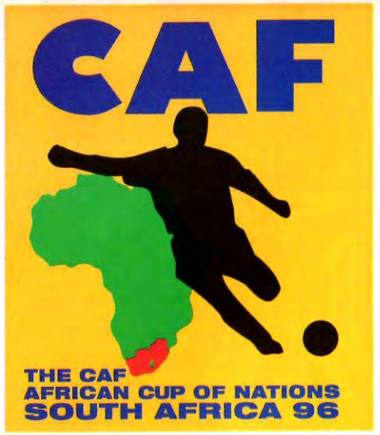
Rumours that 'Ich bin ein Berliner' was rejected unanimously as the club's motto have yet to be confirmed.

PLAYERS AVOID TRIP TO BARBER OF SEVILLE

SEVILLA'S UEFA Cup elimination by Barcelona has saved five of the team's players a trip to one of their home town's barbers.

The group, led by pony-tailed defender Diego Rodriguez ***(pictured right)***, had promised to shave off their hair if they beat Barcelona and got through to the quarter-finals, a stage of the UEFA Cup which Sevilla have never reached.

'Just a bit more off round the ears, please' . . . Rodriguez contemplates a close shave



Pile-up . . . Nigeria celebrate their 1994 Nations Cup victory

The best yet

The 20th African Cup of Nations in South Africa promises to be the most exciting ever. Mark Gleeson sets the scene for the continental jamboree

THE African continent's 16 best footballing nations are converging on South Africa to dispute the biggest title in African soccer.

This, without doubt, should be the best African Nations Cup finals yet held, as African soccer's reputation continues to grow.

There was still considerable confusion at press time as to whether reigning champions Nigeria would be joining former winners such as Ivory Coast, Ghana and Cameroon in making strong bids for the title.

The Nigerian government pulled the national side out of the tournament because of fears for the safety of players. However, last-minute attempts, including an 11th-hour intervention from the Organisation of African Unity, were being made to persuade them to take part.

Hosts South Africa, with the advantage of altitude at their home base in Johannesburg, will have their sights set on success in their first appearance in the finals.

The team have made much progress since their laboured return to international football three years ago, and confidence has been boosted by a run of good form since Clive Barker took over as coach in March 1994.

An increasing number of South Africans are making their way to the professional leagues of Europe, where the physical strength, fitness and experience gained always benefits the national team.

Key players will include John 'Shoes' Moshoeu and Doctor Khumalo, who have the necessary skill and talent to turn matches in favour of the home side. There will be strong home support and growing confidence, helped by Orlando Pirates' victory in the African Champions Cup – the first South African club to win Africa's top club prize.

Another upstart nation, Liberia, have gained from their growing foreign legion. Milan striker George Weah is the obvious focal point of their team, and should be the most talked-about player of the tournament.

Weah was recently voted CAF African Player of the Year and European Player of the Year, and was joint fifth in *WORLD SOCCER's* Player of the Year poll. With players of the quality of James Debbah, Christopher Wreh and Jonathan Sogbie, he can be counted upon to make a big impression on the tournament.

Liberia share their opening group with Nigeria, whose form was dismal in 1995 because they had to do without key players throughout the year.

The return of Emmanuel Amunike, African Footballer of the Year in 1994, and winger Finidi George, a European Champions Cup winner with Ajax Amsterdam, will again put Nigeria in pole position.

This tournament, though, could be the stage for Nwankwo Kanu, the other Nigerian at Ajax, whose international caps are limited to three. He narrowly missed selection for the World Cup in the United States.

Ghana will look to veteran Abedi Pele, who won a gold medal with the Black Stars 14 years ago in Libya, and Anthony Yeboah as they try to extend their record number of triumphs in the tournament. Pele was denied an appearance in the 1992 Final by suspension, and at the last edition in 1994 he was the leader of a hapless and divided Ghanaian team, who failed to get past the quarter-finals.

Much of that was a personal fracas with Yeboah, which apparently has been patched up.

Yeboah, scorer of some fine individual goals for Leeds, has yet to translate his talent at club level in Europe to the international stage. This Nations Cup presents him with a platform to make the transition.

Ivory Coast also can be counted on to figure among the front runners, led by enigmatic Joel Tiehi and Abdoulaye Traore, who will be making a record-equalling sixth appearance at the finals.

Both had success in Senegal in 1992 and will want to repeat it in South Africa.

The North African challenge will be led by Egypt and Algeria, both recovering from the loss of prestige and position in African soccer. Egypt are in a tough group and might not make it past the first round, but Algeria should be among the quarter-finalists.

Then there are Cameroon, Zaire and Zambia, all with the potential to make an impact on the tournament.

Cameroon go to South Africa with a sprinkling of familiar names, but most of the squad is made up of graduates from their recent African Under-20 championship-winning team.

Zaire have steady European-based professionals on hand again for their third successive Nations Cup appearance, but need more confidence to translate their potential into medal-winning success.

Gritty Zambia, of course, are always a factor, led by the evergreen Kalusha Bwalya.

There has never been as broad a range of potential winners and never as charismatic a field of contestants.

Surely the 20th Nations Cup will be a tournament to remember.

THE DRAW

FIRST ROUND

GROUP A

Sat Jan 13 South Africa v Cameroon, Soccer City, Johannesburg.
Mon Jan 15 Angola v Egypt, Johannesburg.
Thurs Jan 18 Cameroon v Egypt, Johannesburg.
Sat Jan 20 South Africa v Angola, Johannesburg.
Weds Jan 24 South Africa v Egypt, Johannesburg.
Weds Jan 24 Angola v Cameroon, King's Park, Durban.

GROUP B

Sun Jan 14 Algeria v Zambia, Free State Stadium, Bloemfontein.
Mon Jan 15 Burkina Faso v Sierra Leone, Bloemfontein.
Thurs Jan 18 Algeria v Sierra Leone, Bloemfontein.
Sat Jan 20 Burkina Faso v Zambia, Bloemfontein.
Weds Jan 24 Sierra Leone v Zambia, Bloemfontein.
Weds Jan 24 Algeria v Burkina Faso, Boet Erasmus Stadium, Port Elizabeth.

GROUP C

Sun Jan 14 Nigeria v Zaire, Durban.
Tues Jan 16 Gabon v Liberia, Durban.
Fri Jan 19 Gabon v Zaire, Durban.
Sun Jan 21 Liberia v Nigeria, Durban
Thurs Jan 25 Liberia v Zaire, Jo'burg.
Thurs Jan 25 Nigeria v Gabon, Durban.

GROUP D

Sun Jan 14 Ivory Coast v Ghana, Port Elizabeth.
Tues Jan 16 Mozambique v Tunisia, Port Elizabeth.
Fri Jan 19 Ghana v Tunisia, Port Elizabeth.
Sun Jan 21 Ivory Coast v Mozambique, Port Elizabeth.
Thurs Jan 25 Ivory Coast v Tunisia, Port Elizabeth.
Thurs Jan 25 Ghana v Mozambique, Bloemfontein.

QUARTER-FINALS

Sat Jan 27 Winner A v Runner-up B, Johannesburg.
Sat Jan 27 Winner B v Runner-up A, Bloemfontein.
Sun Jan 28 Winner C v Runner-up D, Durban.
Sun Jan 28 Winner D v Runner-up C, Port Elizabeth.

SEMI-FINALS

Weds Jan 31 Winner Johannesburg v Winner Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg.
Weds Jan 31 Winner Durban v Winner Bloemfontein, Durban.

THIRD PLACE PLAY-OFF

Sat Feb 3 Johannesburg.

FINAL

Sat Feb 3 Johannesburg.

The men to watch

GEORGE WEAH (Liberia)

GEORGE WEAH of Milan and Liberia may well turn out to be the outstanding individual player in the 1996 African Nations Cup. That would be a deserved reward for a man who has done more than anyone to help his country to get to the finals.

Weah recently completed a memorable treble. He collected FIFA's World Player of the Year award to add to *France Football* magazine's 1995 European Player of the Year Golden Ball and the 1995 CAF African Footballer of the Year award. He was fifth in *WORLD SOCCER*'s Player of the Year poll.

For a man almost resigned to a not too exciting career as a telephone technician in his home country, Weah's success in soccer has gone beyond his wildest dreams.

He readily confesses that without inner fortitude and unquenchable thirst for success, he would have become like many a journeyman footballer. Weah, however, was determined to succeed, and has done so to such an extent that he is now a demi-god in his country, wealthy and willing enough to bail them out of trouble.

"It has been extremely difficult, and if I hadn't had a lot of courage in the early days I wouldn't be here today," he says. "Looking back, my toughest time was when I joined Invincible Eleven, the most popular club in Liberia.

"I had a lot of problems with the fans, who felt that I had the ability to play but was just too idle. I was dropped and didn't regain my place for a long time."

Eventually, however, Weah's exploits attracted attention from a Cameroonian club, Tonnerre Yaounde, who gave him a three-year contract. But his stay with the club was only to last six months, as Arsene Wenger, then coach of French side Monaco, made an irresistible offer which Tonnerre grudgingly accepted.

"I learnt a lot under Arsene during my five years at the club," says Weah modestly. Scoring 57 goals in four seasons with them, proves that. Eventually, however, he felt that it was time to move on, and he decided to go to Paris Saint Germain, for a record fee of £3m – the highest for any African player anywhere in the world at the time.

Weah's 11 goals helped PSG to clinch the French title in 1994, but then things went awry. With his blistering pace and prolific scoring rate, he emerged top scorer in the 1995 Champions League with six goals, but behind the scenes Weah was not getting on well with his coach, Luis Fernandez.

Weah was also the victim of racist chants by certain PSG fans in his last game for the club, before his £6.5million move to Milan last summer. One ungrateful fan carried a banner saying: 'Go Weah – We don't need you.'

Despite the dream move to Italy Weah has never forgotten his war-torn homeland. In an era when players expect reasonable financial returns for wearing their country's colours, Weah spent some of his own money, reputedly £5,000, to settle the Liberian FA's unpaid membership dues to the Confederation of African Football as well as FIFA.

"I'm proud of Liberia and I don't think people should look down on us," he says. "Rather than have Liberia make headlines because of this, I settled the amount."

He also bore the financial brunt of his country's successful Nations Cup qualifying campaign, leading the Lone Star, as the Liberian national team are called, to the finals for the first time. Using his connections with Diadora, he has secured a sponsorship deal worth £30,000 for the Lone Star's Nations Cup quest in South Africa.

The Liberian people are not exactly unappreciative of his efforts. He has risen to demi-god status among the football-crazy populace for his selfless service to an otherwise polarised country. Four postal stamps recently were released in tribute to him in Liberia.

Despite Liberia's position as a virtual unknown on the global scene, Weah is something of a world citizen. He is known throughout Africa and Europe and has a home in New York, where his children are at school.

At 29, he still has at least five years of play left in him. But what of life after football?

"I would like to head the Liberian Football Association and use my experience to develop the game at home, or become a sports ambassador for the United Nations."

But before that comes the challenge of leading his country in the Nations Cup.

OSASU OBAYIUWANA

JOHN 'SHOES' MOSHOEU (South Africa)

JOHN MOSHOEU is not known as 'Shoes' for nothing. Blessed with considerable skill and a visionary touch, he is an integral part of South Africa's efforts to win the African Nations Cup at their first attempt.

At 29, he is something of a late developer on the international stage, but South Africa's long-standing isolation denied him an earlier opportunity.

Moshoeu started his career in his native Soweto but was rejected by glamour club Kazier Chiefs as a teenager. It was instead at unfashionable Blackpool that he got his start, helping the club to promotion from the Second Division.

The team stayed just one season in the top flight despite some superb performances from Moshoeu, whose leisurely touch on the ball and quick turns made him a big favourite around the country.

Instead of taking up a lucrative transfer to one of the country's bigger sides, he stayed with Blackpool and helped them win promotion again, in 1989. The second time round, Blackpool stayed up and Moshoeu's stock rose.

But by the time South Africa re-entered international football, in July 1992, he had suffered a broken leg and it was not until January the following year that Moshoeu made his international debut, scoring in the friendly against Botswana in Gaborone.

Shortly after came a move to Kaizer Chiefs that cost the club a record R250,000 (£50,000) and brought an ironic sense of satisfaction for the player who had been rejected years earlier.

His career at Chiefs, though, was all too brief, lasting some 14 games before another move, this time to Turkey's Genclerbirligi. Moshoeu's star rose even higher there and he was sold again this July, to Kocaelispor for £800,000 – another record for a South African.

The Nations Cup will be the first opportunity for Moshoeu to display his talents to a wider audience and, it is expected, enhance an ever-growing reputation.

MARK GLEESON

CELESTINE BABAYARO (Nigeria)

AT THE tender age of 17, Celestine Babayaro will be playing in his first African Nations Cup finals.

However, despite having just one cap under his belt, he goes to the tournament with much hope pinned on his young shoulders and a wealth of international experience at club level.

Babayaro, son of a Muslim father and Christian mother, will help to fill the full-back berth, so long the Achilles heel of the Nigerian team. Before him, coaches had tried a succession of players, including two who competed in England – Reuben Agboola (Swansea) and Mike Emenalo (Notts County).

Now Babayaro looks set to make the position his own after his debut against Uzbekistan in the second leg of the Afro-Asian Cup in Lagos in November.

He helped Anderlecht to the 1994-95 Belgian title with 22 League appearances and one game in the UEFA Champions League. This season he played in Anderlecht's abortive two-legged preliminary tie with Ferencvaros of Hungary, which saw the Belgian team surprisingly eliminated.

The second of three footballing brothers, Babayaro was a member of the Nigerian team that won the World Under-17 championships in Japan in 1993. Among his contemporaries were Nwankwo Kanu (Ajax Amsterdam) and Wilson Oruma (Lens), who are both expected to be included in the Nations Cup squad.

Elder brother Emmanuel kept goal in that team and has graduated to the Nigerian Olympic side, while younger brother Layo has been on trial in Belgium with Anderlecht and Ghent.

Celestine's career started with junior club Hotline in Nigeria and might well soon progress to Serie A in Italy, where clubs are already expressing an interest. "If I get the chance. I'll take it, but Anderlecht is also a big team and it will also be good for me to stay," he says.

MARK GLEESON

NATIONS CUP – FACTS AND FIGURES

PREVIOUS WINNERS AND VENUES

1957 ..... Egypt, in Sudan
1959 ..... Egypt, in Egypt
1962 ..... Ethiopia, in Ethiopia
1963 ..... Ghana, in Ghana
1965 ..... Ghana, in Tunisia
1968 ..... Zaire, in Ethiopia
1970 ..... Sudan, in Sudan
1972 ..... Congo, in Cameroon
1974 ..... Zaire, in Egypt
1976 ..... Morocco, in Ethiopia
1978 ..... Ghana, in Ghana
1980 ..... Nigeria, in Nigeria
1982 ..... Ghana, in Libya
1984 ..... Cameroon, in Ivory Coast
1986 ..... Egypt, in Egypt
1988 ..... Cameroon, in Morocco
1990 ..... Algeria, in Algeria
1992 ..... Ivory Coast, in Senegal
1994 ..... Nigeria, in Tunisia.

PREVIOUS WINS: Ghana 4, Egypt 3, Zaire 2, Nigeria 2, Cameroon 2, Algeria 1, Congo 1, Ethiopia 1, Morocco 1, Ivory Coast 1, Sudan 1.

LEADING SCORERS IN PREVIOUS TOURNAMENTS

1957 ..... El Diba (Egypt) 5
1959 ..... El Gohari (Egypt) 3
1962 ..... Badawi (Egypt) 3
Mengistu (Ethiopia) 3
1963 ..... El Chazli (Egypt) 6
1965 ..... Mangle (Ivory Coast) 3
Acheam Kofi (Ghana) 3
1968 ..... Pokou (Ivory Coast) 6
1970 ..... Pokou (Ivory Coast) 8
1972 ..... Keita (Mali) 5
1974 ..... Ndiaye (Zaire) 9
1976 ..... Njo Lea (Guinea) 4
1978 ..... Omondi (Uganda) 4
1980 ..... Labied (Morocco) 3
Odegbami (Nigeria) 3
1982 ..... Alhassan (Ghana) 4
1984 ..... Abou Zeid (Egypt) 4
1986 ..... Milla (Cameroon) 4
Traore (Ivory Coast) 4
1988 ..... Belloumi (Algeria) 2
Milla (Cameroon) 2
Traore (Ivory Coast) 2
Abdelhamid (Egypt) 2
1990 ..... Menad (Algeria) 4
1992 ..... Yekini (Nigeria) 4
1994 ..... Yekini (Nigeria) 5

MOST NATIONS CUP GOALS

(Final tournaments only)
14 – Laurent Pokou (Ivory Coast) 1968, 1970
13 – Rachidi Yekini (Nigeria) 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994
12 – El Chazli (Egypt) 1963, 1970, 1974

MOST GOALS IN A SINGLE TOURNAMENT

9 – Mulamba Ndiaye (Zaire) 1974

MOST GOALS IN A FINAL TOURNAMENT

54 – Egypt in 1974 (average 3.2 per match)

MOST GOALS IN A GAME

Finals
9 – Egypt 6 Nigeria 3 (Ghana, 1963)
Qualifiers
10 – Niger 1 Ghana 9 (qualifier for Sudan, 1970)
Individual
5 – Laurent Pokou (Ivory Coast) 6 Ethiopia 1, Sudan, 1970

BIGGEST MARGIN OF VICTORY

Finals
5 – Ivory Coast 6 Ethiopia 1 (Sudan, 1970)
Qualifiers
8 – Niger 1 Ghana 9 (qualifier for Sudan, 1970)

FASTEST GOALS IN FINALS TOURNAMENT

23 seconds – Ayman Mansou (Egypt v Gabon, Tunisia, 1994)
50 seconds – Mustapha Fetoui (Morocco v Sudan, Ethiopia, 1976)

FIRST GOAL

10 February 1957 – Raafat for Egypt, with a 21st-minute penalty against Sudan in Khartoum.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Egypt have made more appearances (14 out of 19) than any other team in the finals of the African Nations Cup. They also have won the tournament three times, one fewer than record-holder Ghana.

YOUNGEST COMPETITORS IN FINAL TOURNAMENT

Daniel Amokachi (Nigeria) – 17 years, 2 months (Algeria, 1990)
Yousouf Fofana (Ivory Coast) – 17 years, 8 months, 8 days (Ivory Coast, 1984)

MOST NATIONS CUP MATCHES

Muda Lawal (Nigeria) – 26 Nations Cup final matches in six successive tournaments (1976, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1986). Emmanuel Kunde (Cameroon) – 25 matches in a row in 1982, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1990 and 1992.

MOST TOURNAMENTS

Lawal and Kunde share the record of competing in the most tournaments (six) with Ethiopian Worku Mengistu (1959, 1962, 1963, 1965, 1968, 1970) and Rabah Madjer of Algeria (1980, 1982, 1984, 1986, 1990, 1992). That could be equalled in South Africa by Ivorian striker Abdoulaye Traore.

HOME VICTORIES

Eight of the previous 19 tournaments have been won by the host nation. Egypt and Ghana have so twice.

ABDELHAFID TASFAOUT (Algeria)

IN Abdelhafid Tasfaout, Algeria have finally found a worthy successor to the great Rabah Madjer, one of the goalscorers in Algerian football's finest hour to date, the 2-1 defeat of West Germany in the 1982 World Cup finals in Spain.

The 26-year-old made his debut for the national side against Congo in the 1992 Nations Cup finals and immediately impressed with his technique and vision. Since then he has been a wanted man.

His performances as an attacking midfielder for Mouloudia Oran in the 1994 African Champions Cup semi-final against eventual winners Esperance so impressed the Tunisian champions that they tried to sign him. But Esperance were forced to bide their time while Tasfaout completed his military service. By then the player had been spotted by Auxerre coach Guy Roux, who took him to France last summer to join national team-mate Moussa Saib.

Abdelhafid Tasfaout missed the 1994 African Nations Cup in Tunisia after Algeria's last-minute disqualification for fielding an ineligible player. That delay may have served only to heighten the impact he makes in South Africa.

GAVIN HAMILTON

ALPHONSE TCHAMI (Cameroon)

WHEN Boca Juniors announced they were paying £1.2million for a Cameroonian from OB Odense of Denmark, the ever-critical Argentinian press pooh-poohed the decision, accusing them of going on another of their erratic spending sprees.

But after 'El Negro' (Spanish for 'The Black'), as Alphonse Tchami is affectionately known, scored both goals in Boca's 2-0 defeat of Newell's Old Boys, his worth was no longer in doubt. The press were lavish in their praise with *El Grafico* featuring Tchami on its cover two weeks running.

It was all a long way from local side Unisport Bafang, where Tchami began his career in Cameroon. He won a place in the Indomitable Lions' 1990 World Cup squad, but a last-minute injury left him watching the action on TV back home in Yaounde.

Tchami left Cameroon for Europe in 1991. It was while playing for East German side Carl Zeiss Jena that he attracted the attention of Alan Simonsen, then manager of Danish side Vejle BK, who signed him.

Tchami's career took off in Denmark and at the end of his first season he moved to OB Odense.

He was inspirational in Cameroon's crucial Nations Cup 3-1 defeat of Malawi, in which the Lions avoided the humilation of missing another Nations Cup after their failure to qualify in 1994.

Cameroon will be attempting to win the Nations Cup for keeps in South Africa – they have won the current trophy twice. Tchami, regarded as Roger Milla's heir apparent, will be the man on whom they pin their title hopes.

OSASU OBAYIUWANA

ANTHONY YEBOAH (Ghana)

AT the 1994 Nations Cup in Tunisia, Anthony Yeboah, then top scorer in the Bundesliga with Eintracht Frankfurt, was keen to make amends for Ghana's 11-10 defeat on penalities by the Ivory Coast in the 1992 Final in Senegal.

But Yeboah failed to score a single goal in the tournament as the Elephants again beat Ghana, this time in the quarter-final, 2-1. The Ghanaian camp had been torn apart by 'the battle of the egos' between Yeboah, now setting the English Premiership ablaze with some stunning goals for Leeds United, and midfielder Abedi Pele, of Italian side Torino.

While Yeboah accepts that he and Abedi are not the best of pals off the pitch, he admits his ability to perform for the Black Stars in South Africa will be directly linked to the Torino player's creativity in midfield.

"It's good we play together. With all the attention that will be focused on me in the Nations Cup, I need Abedi to support me up front when I am confronted by hard-tackling defenders. If I am tightly marked, Abedi is equally capable of doing the damage," he says.

With Ghana having to face the Ivory Coast in their opening Group D match, many Ghanaians are fearful of another defeat, but Yeboah believes they are ready to lay the "so-called jinx to rest".

He confesses that has found it pretty awkward fitting in with the Black Stars' set-up since moving to Europe in 1988 to join Saarbrucken in the German Second Division, but he warns that the die is cast as Ghana seek their fifth Nations Cup and first for 14 years.

"We are not at the Nations Cup to joke and any team that takes us for a ride will pay dearly for it."

Tough talk from a man for whom actions speak even louder than his words.

OSASU OBAYIUWANA

Mark Gleeson's Group-by-Group guide to the Nations Cup teams

Group A

ANGOLA

FOR the war-torn Angolans, much success has been achieved in qualifying for their first appearance at the finals. The rest risk writing off the Angolans at their own peril.

Under coach Carlos Alhinho, the mineral-rich central African nation's players have shown a lot of promising development.

This is best exemplified by the 18-year-old Akwa, who was signed by Benfica last season, went on as a substitute in the Champions League and has now been loaned out to Alverca to learn the ropes in Portugal.

He has represented Angola, – nickname Palancas Negras – at all junior levels and scored three key goals for the senior side in the qualifiers, including a penalty in the home match against Mali.

Coach Alhinho, who played for Portugal and was the first man to play for Benfica, Sporting Lisbon and Porto, also has several other Portuguese-based players to call on – including Paulao at Benfica, Jony at Salguerios and Sporting Braga's Luisinho. There are also several in the lower ranks of the Portuguese League and a number from domestic champions Petro Atletico.

Palancas Negras . . . the Angolan national side

LIKELY SQUAD

Goalkeepers

MARITO	Petro Atletico
ORLANDO	Sagrada Esperanca
ZE GORDO	Sporting Luanda

Defenders

AMADEU	Penafiel (Por)
Antonio NETO	Petro Atletico
Chico DINIS	Petro Atletico
DIOGO	Torres Novas (Por)
WILSON	Gil Vicente (Por)
Helder VICENTE	Petro Atletico
MINHONHA	Nacional Benquela

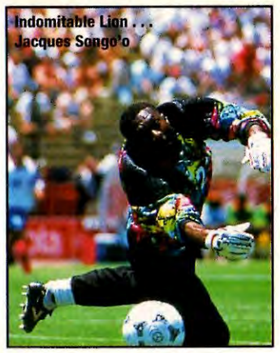
Midfielders

AURELIO	Petro Atletico
Carlos PEDRO	Academica Coimbra (Por)
CASTELLA	Primiero Maio
David SANTOS	Evora (Por)
KEPE	Progresso Luanda
QUINZINHO	AS Aviacao

Forwards

AKWA	Alverca (Por)
JONY	Salgueiros (Por)
LUISINHO	Sporting Braga (Por)
PAULAO	Benfica (Por)
ROSARIO	Petro Atletico
TUBIA	CD Aves (Por)

Coach Carlos ALHINHO (Por)


Indomitable Lion . . . Jacques Songo'o

CAMEROON

THE Indomitable Lions qualified through the back door, given a lifeline in Group One after Lesotho withdrew.

They took the chance in great style with an away win in their penultimate match against Malawi and then a 1-0 home win over Zimbabwe.

Coach Jules Nyongha will be introducing several of Cameroon's African Under-20 championship-winning sides of 1993 and 1995 to the rigours of full international football, but he is also likely to recall Francois Omam-Biyik, scorer of the opening goal at the 1990 World Cup in Italy, and Jacques Songo'o, who helped Metz to the top of the French First Division this season.

This, of course, all hinges on Cameroon avoiding the suspension threatened by FIFA if they do not undo the interference from government which led to the sacking of the last federation.

A threat of an international suspension, including participation in the Nations Cup finals, has been hanging over them, and inhibiting decent preparation for the finals.

Cameroon meet South Africa in the tournament's opening game and given their past success on leading stages, they might just upset the home country.

LIKELY SQUAD

Goalkeepers

Boukar ALIOUM	Samsunspor (Tur)
William ANDEM	Cruzeiro (Bra)
Jacques SONGO'O	Metz (Fra)

Defenders

Hans AGBO	Olympic Mvolye
Bertin EBWELLE	Canon Yaounde
Raymond KALLA	Canon Yaounde
Tobie MIMBOE	Olympic Mvolye
Simon MOUKOKO	Canon Yaounde
Denis Tcantal NDE	Racing Bafoussam
Justice SANDJONG	Vasas Budapest (Hun)

Midfielders

Roger FEUTMBA	Kortrijk (Bel)
Marc-Vivien FOE	Lens (Fra)
Sunday JANG	Olympic Mvolye
Joseph LEWONO	Tonnerre Yaounde
Ntoko NJUME	Publikum (Slo)
Jean-Claude PAGAL	Club America (Mex)
Augustine SIMO	Torino (Ita)

Forwards

David EMBE	Lariss (Gre)
Pius NDIEFI	Valence (Fra)
Georges MOUYEME	Angers (Fra)
Francois OMAM-BIYIK	Club America (Mex)
Alphonse TCHAMI	Boca Juniors (Arg)

Coach Jules NYONGHA

EGYPT

THE traditional rulers of African football go to South Africa seeking to end a long slump.

Ten years have passed since they won the trophy and since they last reached the semi-finals.

But recent success at Under-23 level at the All-Africa Games in Zimbabwe gave the country a lift, and led to the appointment of the Olympic team's coach, Ruud Krol, as head of the national squad.

Krol, a World Cup veteran with Holland, has former coach Mohsen Salah as his assistant, a far from healthy situation in the volatile world of Arab football. But he will have more pressing problems than watching his back as he prepares the team.

Krol has opted to rid himself of most of the players who helped Egypt qualify as winners of Group Six, and introduced a new mix of players from the winning team at the All-Africa Games and some discarded veterans, such as Ayman Mansour of Zamalek.

Then there is the injury to Hani Ramzy, the master of the Egyptian defence and a Bundesliga regular with Werder Bremen. Add a tough group, and Krol's team will need to play above their recent form to set the record straight.

LIKELY SQUAD

Goalkeepers

Sayed EL BISHBISH	Mansoura
Nader EL SAYED	Zamalek
Essam ABDELAZIM	Al Ittihad

Defenders

Medhat ABDELHAD	Zamalek
Amr EL HADIDY	Al Ahly
Sami EL SHISHINI	Zamalek
Samir KAMMOUNA	Arab Contractors
Yasser RADWAN	Baladia
Hani RAMZY	Werder Bremen (Ger)
Mohamed YOUSEEF	Al Ahly

Midfielders

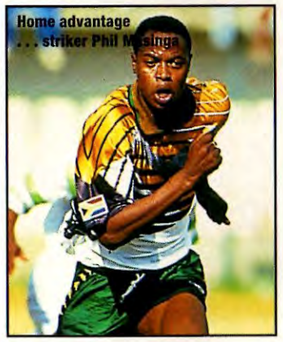
Islam EL SHATER	Al Ittihad
Tarek FAHIM	Al Canal
Mohamed KAMMOUNA	Mansoura
Hadi KHASHABA	Al Ahly
Daoud NASR	Mansoura
Mohamed SABRI	Zamalek
Magdi TOLBA	Levski Sofia (Bul)

Forwards

Ahmed ABDELMONEIM	Al Ahly
Ahmed EL KASS	Zamalek
Hazem EMAM	Zamalek
Ali MAHER	Arsenal
Ayman MANSOUR	Zamalek

Coach Ruud KROL (Hol)

Pharaoh veteran . . . Ayman Mansour


Home advantage . . . striker Phil Masinga

SOUTH AFRICA

NEVER before have a team making their first appearance had such a good chance of success at the Nations Cup finals.

But that stands to reason, solely on the basis of home ground advantage, particularly the high altitude of Johannesburg, and the growing confidence of a team that initially struggled to get off the ground after three decades of isolation.

Coach Clive Barker has put self-belief back in the team and has been assisted by the growing number of players who have moved to the more professional confines of Europe.

South Africa, though, faced an anxious, and ultimately disappointing, wait before the finals to see if defensive kingpin Lucas Radebe of Leeds United had recovered sufficiently from a knee injury. He hadn't, and they will miss him.

One positive sign is the emergence of a goalscorer in the Bundesliga, Sean Dundee of Karlsruhe, but attempts to get him back home to play his first international have been thwarted by club commitments.

There are others to count, particularly the mercurial Doctor Khumalo, who loves a stage on which to perform, and John Moshoeu, who can turn a game his way if in the mood. Guts and determination are needed, and might just be the recipe for an unprecedented triumph.

SQUAD

Goalkeepers

Andre ARENDSE	Cape Town Spurs
TLALE	QwaQwa Stars
Roger DE SA	Mamelodi Sundowns

Defenders

Mark FISH	Orlando Pirates
TUCKER	Pretoria City
Edward MOTALE	Orlando Pirates
Sizwe MOTAUNG	Mamelodi Sundowns
David NYATHI	Cape Town Spurs
Neil TOVEY	Kaizer Chiefs

Midfielders

Innocent BUTHELEZI	Mamelodi Sundowns
Doctor KHUMALO	Kaizer Chiefs
MAKALAKALANE	Zuruch (Swi)
Helman MKHALELE	Orlando Pirates
John MOETI	Orlando Pirates
Zane MOOSA	Mamelodi Sundowns
John MOSHOEU	Kacaelispor (Tur)
Eric TINKLER	Vitoria Setubal (Por)

Forwards

Sean BARTLETT	Cape Town Spurs
Sean DUNDEE	Karlsruhe (Ger)
Phil MASINGA	Leeds United (Eng)
Mark WILLIAMS	Wolves (Eng)

Coach Clive BARKER

Group B

ALGERIA

COACH Ali Fergani, who captained the country to the shock win over West Germany at the 1982 World Cup finals, is hoping to recreate past glory with his new team.

Fergani was appointed to take over from former team-mate Rabah Madger after a series of mediocre performances, and saw Algeria through to the finals with an away draw in the qualifiers against Egypt and a narrow home win over Tanzania.

The basis of his team will revolve around Auxerre players Moussa Saib, a survivor of the team who won the Nations Cup in 1990, and striker Abdfelhafid Tasfaout, who has made a big impression since his arrival in France in the summer.

Fergani is trying to blend in youthful talent that will give Algeria a decent chance of qualifying for the 1998 World Cup finals in France, and admits that the Nations Cup is just a stepping stone in that direction.

But the North Africans will be a formidable force, particularly after being drawn in the weakest of the opening-round groups. Other veterans from 1990 include midfielders Cherif El Quazani and Djamel Menad, while St Etienne's Liazid Sandjak is expected to get a recall despite not playing in any of the qualifying games.

Desert Warrior . . . Cherif El Ouazani

LIKELY SQUAD

Goalkeepers

Mohamed Reda ACIMI	WA Tlemcen
Aomar HAMENED	JS Kabylie
M'hamed HANNICHED	US Chaouia

Defenders

Arezki AMROUCHE	JS Kabylie
Omar BELATOUI	MC Oran
Abderrezak DAHMANI	CR Belouzidad
Faycel HAMDANI	WA Boufarik
Tarik LAZIZI	MC Alger
Mourad SLATNI	CR Belouzidad
Sid Ahmed ZERROUKI	MC Oran

Midfielders

Ali DAHLEB	WA Tlemcen
Billal DZIRI	USM Alger
Cherif EL OUAZANI	MC Oran
Kamel KACI SAID	Zamalek (Egy)
Reda MATEM	ES Setif
Mahieddine MEFTAH	JS Kabylie
Moussa SAIB	Auxerre (Fra)

Forwards

Djamel MENAD	JS Kabylie
Azzedine RAHIM	USM Alger
Liazid SANDJAK	St Etienne (Fra)
Abdelhafid TASFAOUT	Auxerre (Fra)
Nacer ZEKRI	USM Alger

Coach Ali FERGANI

Hopeful . . . Aboubakari Quattara

BURKINA FASO

ANOTHER surprise qualifier, who disposed of Morocco in their group and finished top of the standings, above Ivory Coast.

But just what sort of mettle they have for the big occasion remains to be seen.

They take to South Africa an internationally-inexperienced squad, but buoyed by the unexpected success achieved in the qualifiers.

Winger Seydou Traore, who recently moved to France, is expected to interest the huge number of scouts certain to be on hand for the tournament.

Most the players are based at home and the majority will come from League and Cup double-winners ASFA Yennega. This is only the second time that the Burkinabe will compete in the finals. In 1978 they lost all three of their opening-round matches.

Coach Idrissa 'Saboteur' Traore is the man behind the success of the team. He has been quietly unearthing more talent for the squad ahead of the finals. Players include Idrissa Kabore, goalkeeper of Ghanaian club Hearts of Oak, whose parents hail from Burkina Faso.

They should have some chance of causing an upset.

LIKELY SQUAD

Goalkeepers

Ibrahim DIARRA	SEEB (Oman)
Idrissou KABORE	Hearts of Oak (Gha)
Privat OUADRAOGO	ASFA Yennega

Defenders

Ousmane COULIBALY	USCB
Madou DOSSAMA	Etoile Filante
Ousseni DIOP	ASFA Yennega
Mamadou KONE	USFA
Seydou KONE	RC Bobo-Dialassou
Camille PALENFO	ASFA Yennega
Mathurin SANOU	RC Bobo-Dialassou

Midfielders

Urbain BATIONO	(USFA)
Hassan KAMAGATE	ASFA Yennega
Alain NANA	Etoile Filante
Sidi NAPON	Viry Chatillon (Fra)
Aboubakari QUATTARA	ASFA Yennega
Dieudonne SANOU	Yacoube Mansour (Mor)
Brahima TRAORE	Bressuire (Fra)

Forwards

Indrisse BAGA	ASFA Yennega
Abdoulaye OUEDRAOGO	FSV Frankfurt (Ger)
Ousmane SANOU	USFA
Salis SANOU	ASFB
Seydou TRAORE	Bressuire (Fra)

Coach Idrissa TRAORE

SIERRA LEONE

THE Leone Stars will again be represented by a cradle of young players, including 16-year-old Mohamed Kallon, recently signed by Internazionale of Milan.

Kallon, the youngest of three brothers in the squad, broke the world record for the youngest-ever international last January in the qualifying match against Gambia, and got his first goal against Congo in April. He was 15 years, six months and 16 days old at the time.

When he gets to South Africa he will break Daniel Amokachi's record as the youngest Nations Cup competitor.

Kallon, now on loan to Lugano in Switzerland, is one for the future, but the immediate reality for Sierra Leone is classy opposition in Algeria and Zambia in Group B.

Sierra Leone have a new coach in Swede Roger Palmgren, once an assistant to Sven Goran Eriksson at Sampdoria. He is pleased because so many of his squad are good enough to join European clubs, but is also disappointed to find many of them stuck in the reserves.

Playmaker Lamine Conteh has just signed for SV Meppen in Germany's Second Division, and it is vital he gets a few games under his belt to be fully tuned for a pivotal role in South Africa.

LIKELY SQUAD

Goalkeepers

Brima KAMARA	East End Lions
Osiad MARAH	Tienen (Bel)
Jonathan TAYLOR	Mighty Blackpool

Defenders

Ibrahim BAH	Port Authority
Lamin BANGOURA	Kaloum Stars (Gui)
Kewulay CONTEH	Atalanta (Ita)
Kemokai KALLON	Tadamon (Leb)
Abubakari KAMARA	Ismailia (Egy)
Mohamed KANU	Eendracht Aalst (Bel)
Francis KOROMA	Diamond Stars

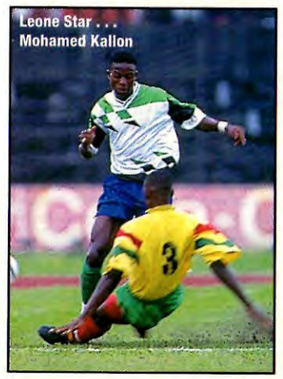
Midfielders

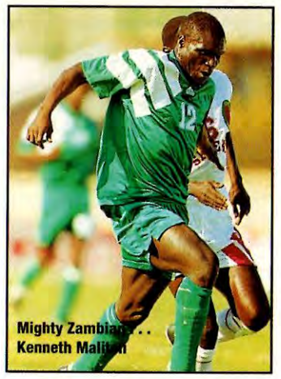
Lamine CONTEH	SV Meppen (Ger)
Alhaji JALLOH	Mighty Blackpool
Musa KALLON	Sportul Bucharest (Rom)
Amidu KARIM	Shebin El Kam (Egy)
Chernoh MANSARAY	Al Canal (Egy)
Mohamed SILLAH	KAA Gent (Bel)
John SAMA	Visby (Swe)

Forwards

Mohamed CONTEH	Mighty Blackpool
John GBASSAY SESSAY	Vitoria Setubal (Por)
Mohamed KALLON	Lugano (Swi)
Mohamed MANSARAY	Tadamon (Leb)
Rachid WURIE	Beerschot (Bel)

Coach Roger PALMGREN (Swe)


Leone Star . . . Mohamed Kallon


Mighty Zambian . . . Kenneth Malitoli

ZAMBIA

JUST one year after the tragic air disaster that wiped out almost their entire team, the Zambians made it all the way to the Final of the 1994 Nations Cup in Tunisia.

They will be hoping to go one better this time round and become the first team from southern Africa to win the African championship.

Danish-born coach Raoul Poulsen has plenty of young talent at his disposal, but the kind of star quality they possessed in the past is fading.

The anchors will again be Kalusha Bwalya, now earning his pension in Mexico with Club America, and the big striker Kenneth Malitoli, who Poulsen prefers to play behind the front two.

Young striker Denis Lota is one who might catch the eye and Elijah Litana, who scored in the Final against Nigeria in Tunis, will be tough competition.

But Zambia are not the considerable force they once were, particularly in defence. Economically, the country is dying a slow death, while government and company subsidy of football no longer exists. Clubs are struggling and this has had an impact on the national team.

Luckily for Zambia, they are in a relatively easy opening-round group, but whether they can make the semi-finals remains to be seen.

LIKELY SQUAD

Goalkeepers

Davis PHIRI	Kabwe Warriors
James PHIRI	Zanaco
Stephen ZIMBA	Roan United

Defenders

Aggrey CHIYANGI	Power Dynamos
Harrison CHONGO	Al Tuum (Sau)
Allan KAMWANGA	Mufulira Wanderers
Elijah LITANA	Al Hilal (Sau)
Hilary MAKASA	Roan United
Mordon MALITOLI	NKANA FC
JONES MWEWA	Power Dynamos

Midfielders

Jonson BWALYA	FC Lucerne (Swi)
Kalusha BWALYA	Club America (Mex)
John LUNGU	Roan United
Linos MAKWAZA	Power Dynamos
Mwape MITI	Power Dynamos
Vincent MUTALE	Mulfulira Wanderers
Andrew TEMBO	Zamsure

Forwards

Joel BWALYA	Cercle Brugge (Bel)
Denis LOTA	Witbank Aces (SA)
Rogers LUPIYA	Cape Town Spurs (SA)
Kenneth MALITOLI	Esperance (Tun)
Bilton MUSONDA	Mufulira Wanderers

Coach Raoul POULSEN (Den)

Group C

NIGERIA

THE African champions will now be taking part after threatening to withdraw following fears for the safety of players in the light of the country's human rights record.

Their preparations were disrupted by the arguments over their participation, and they will want to forget a dismal 1995, in which they were bundled out of the Intercontinental Cup in Saudi Arabia and beaten three times in a row in the US Cup. New coach Jo Bonfrere has to get back to basics with a team brimming with talent but lacking consistency.

Bonfrere was assistant to Dutch compatriot Clemens Westerhof and enjoys the confidence of a playing group who had regular bust-ups with Westerhof.

Now Bonfrere has to mould them again into an effective unit. If he does, they must be fancied to become only the second team to win back-to-back triumphs.

The list of squad members is impressive but it is a relatively new addition who, in all likelihood, will emerge above the pack.

Young Eagle . . . Nwankwo Kanu

Super Eagle . . . Finidi George

Ajax youngster Nwankwo Kanu is likely to be a revelation to an African audience after his success in Europe. Team-mate Finidi George will be a king-pin and Emmanuel Amunike could prove as effective as he was in Tunisia, where he scored twice in the Final.

LIKELY SQUAD

Goalkeepers
Emmanuel BABAYARO — Plateau United
Peter RUFAI — Farense (Por)
Ike SHOROUMU — FC Basel (Swi)

Defenders
Celestin BABAYARO — Anderlecht (Bel)
Austin EGUAVOEN — Uniao Leiria (Por)
Ben IROHA — Vitesse Arnhem (Hol)
Chidi NWANU — St Truiden (Bel)
Uche OKECHUKWU — Fenerbache (Tur)
Godwin OKPARA — Eendracht Aalst (Bel)
Taribo WEST — Auxerre, (Fra)

Midfielders
Mutiu ADEPOJU — Racing Santander (Nig)
Jonathan AKPOBORIE — Waldhof Mannheim (Ger)
Finidi GEORGE — Ajax (Hol)
Victor IKPEBA — Monaco (Fra)
Austin OKOCHA — Eintracht Frankfurt (Ger)
Sunday OLISEH — FC Koln (Ger)
Wilson ORUMA — Lens (Fra)

Forwards
Daniel AMOKACHI — Everton (Eng)
Emmanuel AMUNIKE — Sporting Lisbon (Por)
Nwankwo KANU — Ajax (Hol)
Samson SIASIA — Tirsense (Por)
Rachidi YEKINI — Sporting Gijon (Spa)

Coach Jo BONFRERE (Hol)

GABON

CRISIS has followed crisis in Gabon this year, doing little to engender any enthusiasm for chances of avoiding another Nations Cup fiasco.

Last time out in Tunisia – their first appearance – the team lost both group matches and conceded seven goals without scoring one.

This year their preparations have been hindered by the battle between the federation and League, which left the championship postponed until they had just two months to complete both the First Division and Cup programmes.

Natioal coach Alain da Costa's team, Mangasport, came out tops and he will be hoping that rubs off to players from the other teams called up.

Then there is the spat between ex-captain Pierre Aubame and the federation over his missing the qualifying match in Zambia in April, which now needs presidential intervention to restore relations.

Given the merits of their Group C opponents, Gabon are likely to be booking early seats back to Libreville.

LIKELY SQUAD

Goalkeepers
Claude BABE — Mangasport
Alban GUIROT — Mangasport
Germain MENDOME — Mbilinga

Defenders
Francois AMEGASSE — Mbilinga
Francis KOUMBA — Petrosport
Tristan MOMBO — Mbilinga
Jean-Martin MOULOUNGUI — Mbilinga
Parfait NDONG — Amora, Portugal
Guy NZENG — Petrosport
Thierry RETOA — Mbilinga

Midfielders
Yala ANICET — Mangasport
Pierre AUBAME — FC 105 Libreville
Michel BIYOGHE — (Mbilinga
Etienne KASSA NGOMA — Mbilinga
Jean-Daniel NDONG-NZE — FC 105 Libreville
Jonas OGANDAGA — Mbilinga
Valery ONDO — Esperance (Tun)

Forwards
Aurelien BEKOGO — Mangasport
Brice MACKAYA — Vasas Budapest (Hun)
Regis MANON — Tours (Fra)
Albin NBOUGHA-NZE — FC 105 Libreville
Guy-Roger NZAMBA — FC 105 Libreville

Coach Alain Soares DA COSTA

ZAIRE

IT is more than 20 years now since the Leopards were the powerhouse of African soccer.

But there is no real reason why Zaire cannot reclaim that position. It is a country rich in footballing resources, with more than 50 competent footballers competing in Europe.

But a lack of self-belief, plus all the dehabilitating factors that go with a country in crisis, has denied the team the chance to realise their full potential.

Zaire have little in the way or organisational ability, as demonstrated by their lack of pre-tournament preparation, and a crumbling soccer infrastructure.

Put frankly, the country is a mess and it has had an unfortunate effect on the national team, despite the fact that most players are removed from the daily grind of scraping a living in a country where inflation runs at 100 per cent a month.

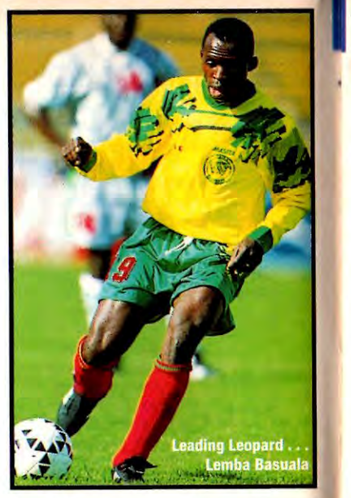
The team will again be led by Belgian-based Kabeya Mukanya, a skilful and strong playmaker at Lommel. Mbote Ndinga and Lemba Basuala, both veterans of the Portuguese First Division, will be on hand as well.

Leading striker Menama Lukaku has decided not to join the team, expressing frustration with the amateurish administration. This will be a big blow.

LIKELY SQUAD

Goalkeepers
Nzamongoni BABALE — DC Motema Pembe
Mukweyanzo BULAYIMA — No club
Biliolo TAMBWE — Vita Club

Defenders
Ndama BAPUPA — KV Oostende (Bel)
Nzongani KIDODA — DC Motema Pembe


Leading Leopard . . . Lemba Basuala

Nzele LEMBI — Waregem (Bel)
Epangala KOLOSE — Vita Club
Ngalama MONKA — DC Motema Pembe
Myunzi NGOMA — DC Motema Pembe
Mansoni NGOMBO — FC Seraing (Bel)

Midfielders
Lemba BASUALA — Belenenses (Por)
Badisbanga ILUNGA — AS Bantous
Zola KINIAMBI — Vita Club
Kapela MBIYAVANGA — DC Motema Pembe
Kabaya MUKANYA — FC Lommel (Bel)
Mbote NDINGA — Vitoria Guimaraes (Por)
Ekanza NSIMBA — Beerschot (Bel)

Forwards
Liombi ESSENDE — Olympic Charleroi (Bel)
Iyambo ETSHELE — Le Havre (Fra)
Makpoloka MANGONGA — Tirsense (Por)
Luata MPIA — DC Motema Pembe
Kona NGOLE — Genclerbirligi (Tur)

Coach Muhamed ERTGAL (Tur)

Lone Star . . . George Weah

LIBERIA

GEORGE WEAH will be the star attraction, but surprisingly he and his team-mates, many of whom play in Europe, will be making their debut at the Nations Cup finals.

War-ravaged Liberia has had little opportunity to play international soccer and it was the players, led by Weah, who got the team entered in the qualifiers and paid the bills to the Confederation of African Football.

That, in essence, has given Milan striker Weah control over the side, which he runs as something of a cartel with other key players James Debbah (Nice, France) and Jonathan Sogbie, who now plays in Switzerland.

The Lone Stars are packed with quality forwards but little else and this failing might be their downfall in a tough group.

Weah will play a midfield role nothing like the striking position he occupies in Serie A for Milan.

Liberia, will be a big unknown factor – something that certainly frightens their opening opposition. But muzzle Weah and you muzzle their team.

LIKELY SQUAD

Goalkeepers
Pewou BESTMAN — Invincible Eleven
Anthony TOKPAH — Hadjuk Split (Cro)

Defenders
Tambah BAMO — Mighty Barolle
Jenkins COOPER — Mighty Barolle
Keith JINLACK — Invincible Eleven
Simon MATTAR — Invincible Eleven
Aunsumana SIRLEAF — LPRC Oilers
Alexander THEO — Bloemfontein Celtic (SA)

Midfielders
Henry BEETOE — Invincible Eleven
Joe DIXON — Old Edwardians (SL)
Alexander FREEMAN — Kelantan (Mal)
Friday ROBERTS — Orlando Pirates (SA)
Jonah SARRWEAH — Africa Sports (IC)
Kelvin SEBWE — Toulouse (Fra)
George WEAH — Milan (Ita)

Forwards
James DEBBAH — Nice (Fra)
Victor KONWLO — Nancy (Fra)
Joe NAGBE — Nice (Fra)
Marr SARR — Hadjuk Split (Cro)
Jonathan SOGBIE — Servette (Swi)
Christopher WREH — Monaco (Fra)

Coach TJ LARDNER

Group D

GHANA

THE Black Stars are highly fancied to extend their record number of triumphs in the Nations Cup to five, especially now that Abedi Pele and Anthony Yeboah have buried their egos and patched up their personality clash.

Their spat split the camp in Tunisia two years ago and led to Ghana's departure at the quarter-final stage.

Both protagonists will go into the tournament on top form: Abedi for Torino in Italy's Serie A and Yeboah in England's Premiership for Leeds United.

But there is much more to Ismael Kurtz's team than those two household names. Ghana will take with them to South Africa several up-and-coming talents, including Osei Kuffour, Ibrahim Tanko, Daniel Addo and Nii Lamptey.

The best of these talented young players could turn out to be Yaw Preko, whose goals have helped Belgian champions Anderlecht recover from a shaky start to the season.

Ghana were pretty emphatic in the qualifiers and are likely to be in top form again in South Africa.

LIKELY SQUAD

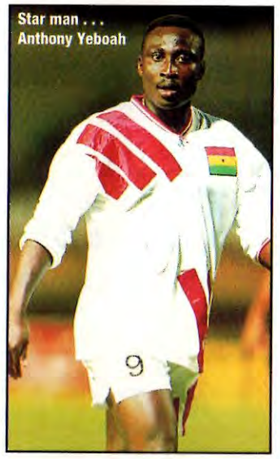
Goalkeepers
Simon ADDO — Ghapoa
Nanabeyin CRENSTIL — Goldfields
Anthony MENSAH — Asante Kotoko

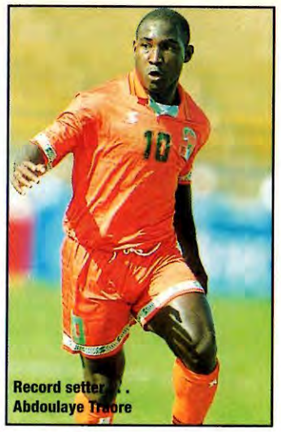
Defenders
Yaw ACHEAMPONG — Real Sociedad (Spa)
Frank AMANKWAH — Asante Kotoko
Isaac ASARE — Anderlecht (Bel)
Stephen BAIDOO — Goldfields
Afo DODOO — Goldfields
Samuel JOHNSON — Kalamata (Gre)
Osei KUFFOUR — Bayern Munich (Ger)

Midfielders
Daniel ADDO — Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)
Abedi Pele AYEW — Torino (Ita)
Ebeneze HAGAN — Kalamata (Gre)
Nii LAMPTEY — Coventry City (Eng)
Ibrahim TANKO — Borussia Dortmund (Ger)
Charles WHITTLE — Neuchatel Xamax (Swi)
Mallam YAHAYA — Borussia Dortmund (Ger)

Forwards
Charles AKUNNOR — Fortuna Koln (Ger)
Kwame AYEW — Uniao Leiria (Por)
Emmanuel DUAH — Eskisehinspor (Tur)
Yaw PREKO — Anderlecht (Bel)
Anthony YEBOAH — Leeds United (Eng)

Coach Ismael KURTZ (Bra)


Star man . . . Anthony Yeboah


Record setter . . . Abdoulaye Traore

IVORY COAST

THE Ivorians have lost only one match in the last two final editions, winning in 1992 in Senegal and being beaten on penalties by Nigeria in the 1994 edition in Tunisia.

This will be their sixth successive trip to the finals and they will again be among the favourites.

Striker Abdoudlaye Traore has been in the squad for all five of those trips and will be equalling the record of the most appearances at final tournaments.

He is among a posse of players from champions ASEC Abidjan who lost to South Africa's Orlando Pirates in the final of the African Champions Cup just before the start of the tournament.

That hindered coach Pierre Pleimelding's chance to put together a decent preparatory programme, but possible club success will buoy up the Ivorians.

The Elephants beat long-time rivals and neighbours Ghana 11-10 on penalties to win in 1992, and knocked them out at the quarter-final stage in Tunisia, setting the scene for a potentially explosive return match in South Africa.

One face certain to be missing is that of Serge-Alain Maguy, who has gone off the boil since an abortive spell in Spain with Atletico Madrid.

LIKELY SQUAD

Goalkeepers
Alain GOUAMENE — Toulouse (Fra)
Losseni KONATE — ASEC Abidjan
Jean-Jacques TIZIE — Stade Abidjan

Defenders
Hyacinthe DADIE — SOA Armee
Cyril DOMORAUD — Red Star (Fra)
Jean-Marie GBAHOU — ASEC Abidjan
Kpassagnon GNETO — Africa Sports
Arsene HOBOU — Africa Sports
Basile Aka KOUAME — ASEC Abidjan
Jean-Marie KOUASSI — ASEC Abidjan

Midfielders
Alioune Sidi BADRA — ASEC Abidjan
Tchiressoa GUEL — ASEC Abidjan
Ibrahim KAMARA — Stade Abidjan
Ibrahim KONE — Africa Sports
Donald SIE — ASEC Abidjan
Zakary TRAORE — Africa Sports
Michel Bi-Tra YORO — Stade Abidjan

Forwards
Sekou BAMBA — ASEC Abidjan
Ahmed QUATTARA — Sporting Lisbon (Por)
Joel TIEHI — Martigues (Fra)
Abdoulaye TRAORE — ASEC Abidjan
Moussa TRAORE — Ales (Fra)

Coach Pierre PLEIMELDING (Fra)

MOZAMBIQUE

THE ambition of Mozambique probably extends no further than improving on their only other previous Nations Cup finals appearance – in Egypt in 1986, when they lost all three of their opening-round matches.

Russian coach Viktor Bondarenko has been fired and replaced by Rui Cacador, a junior coach with the Portuguese federation, on loan to the Mozambicans for the tournament. He has been the national coach of the Mambas before, which helps, and he is expected to bring several new faces from Portugal.

The Mozambicans are not fancied to finish ahead of Ivory Coast or Ghana, although they will have fanatical support on hand.

There are an estimated two million Mozambicans living in South Africa, and they had more fans in Johannesburg in September than the home side when they lost 3-2 in a warm-up international.

Much depends on captain Chiquinho Conde, who has had limited outings this season for Sporting Lisbon. Making wholesale changes to the squad certainly will not help, particularly at this late stage.

LIKELY SQUAD

Goalkeepers
MACEDO — Torroense (Por)
NELITO — Ferroviario Maputo
Rui EVORA — Costa do Sol

Defenders
AliHASSAN — Torres Noves (Por)
Chico OLIVIERA — Chaves (Por)
Joao CHISSANO — Costa do Sol
Jose AUGUSTO — Costa do Sol
LUIS — Desportivo Maputo
Pino BARROS — Ferroviario Maputo
Sergio FAIFE — Costa do Sol

Midfielders
ANTONINHO — Maxaquene
EDMUNDO — Maxaquene
JOJO — Penafiel (Por)
NANA — Costa do Sol
Paulao MIRANDA — Familicao (Por)
Riquito — Costa do Sol
TCHAKA-TCHAKA — Familicao (Por)

Forwards
ARNALDO — Costa do Sol
Chiquinho CONDE — Sporting Lisbon (Por)
Mario ARTUR — Uniao Leiria (Por)
NURO — Maxaquene
TICO-TICO — Desportivo Maputo

Coach Rui CACADOR (Por)

Mamba men . . . Mozambique

TUNISIA

A DISASTROUS performance as hosts last time will certainly spur the Tunisians on.

They have shown some great progress under coach Henryk Kasperczak, who played in the World Cup for Poland before embarking on a coaching career in France.

Admittedly, they looked a little precarious in the early stages of the qualifiers but, in the end, came through well to finish top of their qualifying group.

Kasperczak initially cleared out most of the players who had been part of that miserable failure in March 1994, but slowly they have been making their way back into his plans.

French Second Division midfielder Raouf Bouzaiene, for example, did not play a single qualifying game yet has been recalled for recent friendlies and has been scoring as well.

He is likely to be the only expatriate in the squad now that Faouzi Roussi has returned from Saudi Arabia. The old darling of Tunisian soccer could get a recall if he recovers fitness after a lengthy injury that has delayed his return to Club Africain.

Tunisia are expected to be difficult customers for group favourites Ghana and Ivory Coast, but will have their work cut out if they are to get past the first stage.

LIKELY SQUAD

Goalkeepers
Chokri EL OUAER — Esperance
Radouane SALHI — Etoile Sahel
Boubakar ZITOUNI — Club Africain

Defenders
Hedi BENREKHISSA — Esperance
Sabri JABALLAH — AS Marsa
Mohamed Ali MAHJOUBI — Esperance
Hakim NOUIRA — Esperance
Bechir SAHBANI — CA Bizerte
Hicheri TAOUFIK — Esperance
Tarak THABET — Esperance

Midfielders
Khaled BADRA — Esperance
Zoubier BEYA — Esperance
Raouf BOUZAIENE — Chateauroux (Fra)
Soufiane FEKIH — CS Sfaxien
Abel SELLIMI — Club Africain
Samir SELLIMI — Club Africain
Skander SOUAYAH — CS Sfaxien

Forwards
Abdelkader BENHASSEN — Esperance
Houssam HAJ ALI — Club Africain
Ayedi HAMROUNI — Esperance
Jamel LIMAM — Stade Tunisien
Faouzi ROUISSI — Club Africain

Coach Henryk KASPERCZAK (Pol)

Tales of the unexpected

The 1995-96 UEFA Champions League group stages have thrown up some surprising quarter-final ties. Keir Radnedge reviews the story so far . . .

THE closing stages of Europe's most prestigious club competition, the UEFA Champions League, has a lop-sided look about it.

The sixth and concluding matchday of the group sections led to Legia Warsaw, Nantes and record six-times winners Real Madrid completing the quarter-final line-up. But already waiting for them were holders Ajax, Italian champions Juventus, Germany's unimpressive Borussia Dortmund, transfer-threatened Moscow Spartak, plus Greek champions Panathinaikos.

In an ideal competitive world, Ajax, Madrid, Juventus and – probably – Dortmund would have been kept apart in the knock-out stages. Instead Ajax play Dortmund and Juventus face Madrid over two legs in March. Perhaps there is a case to be made, if UEFA wishes to refine its Wimbledon-tennis seeding control, for a new computation of the rankings once the groups have been wrapped up.

At least order will be partly restored in the semi-finals when Ajax or Dortmund will play Legia Warsaw or Panathinaikos and Real Madrid or Juventus collide with Nantes or Spartak.

The final matchday of the group section contained yet another awesome display from holders and newly-crowned world club champions Ajax. In beating Hungary's Ferencvaros 4-0 in Amsterdam they extended their unbeaten run in the Champions League to 17 matches. Finnish forward Jari Litmanen grabbed two goals in four minutes in the second half to leave the Dutch side comfortable winners of Group D. On an individual level, Litmanen emerged as the competition's leading scorer with six goals.

Ajax thus confirmed their prospective meeting with a Dortmund side who finished up their Group C programme by being held 2-2 at home by Scottish champions Rangers.

The outstanding individual performance of the night was a nine-minute hat-trick provided by Mike Newell of Blackburn Rovers, the English champions whose previous five games had brought them just one goal and one point. Rovers ran up a comfortable 4-1 home win over Rosenborg Trondheim. The Norwegians went into the match at Ewood Park with a slim chance of qualifying for the last eight from Group B. They had to win and hope Legia lost at home to Spartak.

The Norwegians threw themselves into attack from the first minute but thus left their defence exposed to Blackburn's power and pace – and paid a literal penalty, converted by Alan Shearer. Rosenborg hit back after half an hour through Steffen Iversen but their flare was quickly extinguished by Newell's superb finishing between the 31st and 40th minutes.

Rovers cruised home despite being reduced to 10 men from the 52nd minute when midfielder Paul Warhurst – the player fouled for the penalty – was sent off for a second bookable offence of his own.

Warhurst was not the only Englishman sent off on the night. Paul Gascoigne was shown the red card 15 minutes from time in Dortmund when Rangers were 2-1 down. Gordon Durie equalised 10 minutes later as the referee ignored German appeals for offsude.

Denmark's Brian Laudrup had put Rangers ahead after 10 minutes, only for the German champions, certain of finishing group runners-up, to fight back with strikes from German internationals Andy Moller and fit-again Karlheinz Riedle.

Another red card was waved in the direction of Ion Vladoiu of 1986 champions Steaua Bucharest, as they were held 0-0 at home by Juventus. The Italian champions, already safe at the top of Group C, fielded half a team of reserves.

They had struggled to make the kick-off after bad weather prevented their original flight from landing in the Romanian capital, Bucharest. Juventus' squad had to return to Italy and then fly back again on the morning of the game.

No late rescue efforts, however, for Bobby Robson's FC Porto. His Portuguese champions, winners in 1987, knew that to qualify they had to beat Aalborg and hope Nantes lost to Panathinaikos. Brazilian midfielder Emerson scored twice in the second half but the Danes – late re-entrants into the competition after the expulsion of Kiev Dynamo for attempted match-fixing – forced a well-deserved 2-2 draw.

Five former Champions Cup-winners have reached the quarter-finals of the UEFA Cup: Barcelona, PSV Eindhoven, Milan, Bayern Munich and Nottingham Forest.

Jurgen Klinsmann took the individual honours in the third round, scoring six goals over two legs as Bayern Munich wiped out a dispirited Benfica side.

English clubs will only receive three places in next year's competition after UEFA took exception to an indifferent approach to its revamped Intertoto competition. Ironically, the extra place may now go to France, whose only surviving club is Bordeaux . . . who qualified through the Intertoto Cup.

In the Cup-winners Cup, Parma and Paris Saint-Germain meet in the most attractive quarter-final pairing, while the holders, Real Zaragoza, face fellow Spaniards Deportivo La Coruna.

Rapid Vienna, who came back from 2-0 down to overcome Sporting Lisbon 4-2 in the second round, face Moscow Dynamo.

Top gun . . . Jari Litmanen of Ajax

THE QUARTER-FINAL DRAWS

CHAMPIONS CUP
Borussia Dortmund v Ajax Amsterdam
Legia Warsaw v Panathinaikos
Nantes v Moscow Spartak
Real Madrid v Juventus
To be played on March 6 and 20

CUP-WINNERS CUP
Borussia Monchengladbach v Feyenoord
Deportivo La Coruna v Real Zaragoza
Moscow Dynamo v Rapid Wien
Parma v Paris Saint-Germain
To be played on March 7 and 21

UEFA CUP
Bayern Munich v Nottingham Forest
Barcelona v PSV Eindhoven
Slavia Prague v AS Roma
Milan v Bordeaux
To be played on March 5 and 19

LEADING SCORERS

6 .....Jari LITMANEN (Ajax)
5 .....Alessandro DEL PIERO (Juventus)
RAUL (Real Madrid)
4 .....Patrick KLUIVERT (Ajax)
Mike NEWELL (Blackburn)
Fabrizio RAVANELLI (Juventus)
Ivan ZAMORANO (Real Madrid)

Results

GROUP A

Matchday 1 – Weds Sept 13
KIEV DYNAMO v PANATHINAIKOS - *void*
NANTES 0
PORTO 0

Matchday 2 – Weds Sept 27
PANATHINAIKOS 3 (G H Georgiadis 17, Warzycha 30, 46)
NANTES 1 (N'Doram 88)
FC PORTO 2 (Rui Barros 41, 62)
AALBORG 0

Matchday 3 – Weds Oct 18
NANTES 3 (Ouedec 5, Pedros 55, Kosecki 74)
AALBORG 1 (Bo Andersen 46)
FC PORTO 0
PANATHINAIKOS 1 (Markos 40)

Matchday 1 replay – Weds Oct 25
AALBORG 2 (Andersen 7, Madsen 89)
PANATHINAIKOS 1 (Warzycha 42)

Matchday 4 – Weds Nov 1
AALBORG 0
NANTES 2 (Guyot 10, Ouedec 68)
PANATHINAIKOS 0
FC PORTO 0

Matchday 5 – Weds Nov 22
PANATHINAIKOS 2 (Alexoudis 1, G S Georgiadis 38)
AALBORG 0
FC PORTO 2 (Drulovic 10, Ze Carlos 56)
NANTES 2 (Pedros 3, 34)

Matchday 6 – Weds Dec 6
AALBORG 2 (Andersen 11, Madsen 69)
FC PORTO 2 (Emerson 63, 75)
NANTES 0
PANATHINAIKOS 0

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Panathinaikos	6	3	2	1	7	3	11
Nantes	6	2	3	1	8	6	9
FC Porto	6	1	4	1	6	5	7
Aalborg	6	1	1	4	5	12	4

GROUP B

Matchday 1 – Weda Sept 13
BLACKBURN 0
MOSCOW SPARTAK 1 (Yuran 41)
LEGIA WARSAW 3 (Pisz 65, Staniek 69, Pisz 74
ROSENBORG 1 (Jakobsen 64)

Matchday 2 – Weds Sept 27
ROSENBORG 2 (Loken 29, Stensaas 86)
BLACKBURN 1 (Newell 62)
MOSCOW SPARTAK 2 (Nikiforov pen 13, Yuran 52)
LEGIA WARSAW 1 (Jozwiak 82)

Matchday 3 – Weds Oct 18
LEGIA WARSAW 1 (Podbrozny 25)
BLACKBURN ROVERS 0
ROSENBORG 2 (Loken 2, Brattbakk 45)
MOSCOW SPARTAK 4 (Alenichev 59, Nikiforov 66, Kechinov 75, 82)

Matchday 4 – Weds Nov 1
BLACKBURN ROVERS 0
LEGIA WARSAW 0
MOSCOW SPARTAK 4 (Shmarov 2, Yuran 9, Tsimbalar 19, Tikhonov 80)
ROSENBORG 1 (Loken 90)

Matchday 5 – Weds Nov 22
ROSENBORG 4 (Strand 17, Brattbakk 45, Jakobsen 65, Heggem 90)
LEGIA WARSAW 0
MOSCOW SPARTAK 3 (Alenichev 28, Nikiforov 47, Mamedov 54)
BLACKBURN ROVERS 0

Matchday 6 – Weds Dec 6
BLACKBURN ROVERS 4 (Shearer 16, Newell 31, 37, 40)
ROSENBORG 0
LEGIA WARSAW 0
MOSCOW SPARTAK 1 (Mamedov 41)

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Moscow Spartak	6	6	0	0	15	4	18
Legia Warsaw	6	2	1	3	5	8	7
Rosenborg	6	2	0	4	11	16	6
Blackburn	6	1	1	4	5	7	4

GROUP C

Matchday 1 - Weds Sept 13
BORUSSIA DORTMUND 1 (Moller 1)
JUVENTUS 3 (Padovano 12, Del Piero 37, Conte 69)
STEAUA BUCHAREST 1 (Prodan 85)
RANGERS 0

Matchday 2 - Weds Sept 27
RANGERS 2 (Gough 64, Ferguson 73)
BORUSSIA DORTMUND 2 (Herrlich 19, Kree 68)
JUVENTUS 3 (Di Livio 35, Del Piero 40, Ravanelli 49)
STEAUA BUCHAREST 0

Matchday 3 – Weds Oct 18
BORUSSIA DORTMUND 1 (Ricken 58)
STEAUA BUCHAREST 0
JUVENTUS 4 (Ravanelli 15, 76, Conte 17, Del Piero 23)
RANGERS 1 (Gough 79)

Matchday 4 – Weds Nov 1
RANGERS 0
JUVENTUS 4 (Del Piero 16, Torricelli 65, Ravanelli 88, Marocchi 90)
STEAUA BUCHAREST 0
BORUSSIA DORTMUND 0

Matchday 5 – Weds Nov 22
JUVENTUS 1 (Del Piero 90)
BORUSSIA DORTMUND 2 (Zorc 29, Ricken 65)
RANGERS 1 (Gascoigne 32)
STEAUA BUCHAREST 1 (Ilie 55)

Matchday 6 – Weds Dec 6
BORUSSIA DORTMUND 2 (Moller 17, Riedle 49)
RANGERS 2 (B Laudrup 11, Durie 85)
STEAUA BUCHAREST 0
JUVENTUS 0

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus	6	4	1	1	15	4	13
Dortmund	6	2	3	1	8	8	9
Steaua	6	1	3	2	2	5	6
Rangers	6	0	3	3	6	14	3

GROUP D

Matchday 1 - Weds Sept 13
AJAX 1 (Overmars 14)
REAL MADRID 0
GRASSHOPPER 0
FERENCVAROS 3 (Lisztes 61, Vincze 81, 90)

Matchday 2 – Weds Sept 27
FERENCVAROS 1 (Nyilas pen 59)
AJAX 5 (Litmanen 57, pen 79, 87, Kluivert 67, F De Boer 84)
REAL MADRID 2 (Zamorano 69, 89)
GRASSHOPPER 0

Matchday 3 – Weds Oct 18
AJAX 3 (Kluivert 10, 68, George 87)
GRASSHOPPER 0
REAL MADRID 6 (Raul Gonzalez 24, 25, 84, Zamorano 34, 47, Hierro 54)
FERENCVAROS 1 (Kopunovics 63)

Matchday 4 – Weds Nov 1
FERENCVAROS 1 (Albert 36)
REAL MADRID 1 (Raul Gonzalez 73)
GRASSHOPPER 0
AJAX 0

Matchday 5 – Weds Nov 22
FERENCVAROS 3 (Albert 20, Lisztes 24, Nyilas 86 pen)
GRASSHOPPER 3 (Subiat 22, Comisetti 48, Ali Ibrahim 64)
REAL MADRID 0
AJAX 2 (Litmanen 65, Kluivert 75)

Matchday 6 – Weds Dec 6
AJAX 4 (Overmars 17, R De Boer 22, Litmanen 62, 66)
FERENCVAROS 0
GRASSHOPPER 0
REAL MADRID 2 (Raul Gonzalez 55, Michel 67)

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ajax	6	5	1	0	15	1	16
Real Madrid	6	3	1	2	11	5	10
Ferencvaros	6	1	2	3	9	19	5
Grasshopper	6	0	2	4	3	13	2

Brave new world

The growth of the Internet opens all sorts of possibilities for football. Jim Foulerton explores the sites and sounds of soccer on the Net . . .

WANTED: I'm collecting material on my favourite 10 footballers, past and present, and compiling a detailed profile of each. I've enough info on Pele, Cruyff, Maradona, Bobby Moore and Charlton. I'm currently working on Zico but I only seem to be able to get the basics from past copies of* WORLD SOCCER *and various books – goals, age, number of caps etc. If anyone has anything else, maybe we could do a swap – please write to the following address . . .

Such a notice posted in a magazine, regardless of circulation, would probably get a lukewarm response.

The same plea for help on the Internet will be more successful. Why? First, the target audience is infinitely greater. Secondly, passing on information as bits (via computers) rather than atoms (via postal systems) is far easier, cheaper and more efficient. Thirdly, and this is where the Internet really comes into its own, there is an extraordinary willingness among users to put up information for free on the worldwide web. And there just happens to be a Zico home page with everything you ever wanted to know about him.

Football on the Internet is marching in step with the dramatic rise in the numbers of Net users. It is enormously popular, as of course it is on every medium you care to mention. The layout may not be quite as pleasing to the eye and it is not as easy to flick from page to page, but unlike coverage in magazines, newspapers and on television and radio, the intelligence (not often you hear that in connection with football fans) is with the receiver, rather than the transmitter.

In other words, you may want to read something about Julian Dicks rather than Zico, Mick Quinn instead of Robert Baggio and you can, be it via the West Ham home pages (official or unofficial), Usenet, discussion boards – or maybe under Food and Drink for Quinn.

That element of editorial control, together with the sheer volume of information available on the Internet, gives the user hitherto unknown capabilities. If, for instance, fanzines in the virtual world don't grab you any more than their real world equivalents, don't give up, there's more.

How about some statistics? Did you know that since the 1975-76 season Benfica and Porto's dominance of the Portuguese title has been interrupted just twice – by Sporting? The location address or URL (htt;//shiva.dl.uminho.pt/-Miguel/Futebol/pt/champ/ptchamp.html) is, granted, a bit of a mouthful but in fact you don't need it as the search engine does it all for you.

Type in soccer, then Portugal, up comes your menu and there you have it – in seconds.

How about a look at Germany? Follow the same procedures, up comes the menu with 28 home pages ranging from Germany to VfB Leipzig – food for thought indeed.

What do we have here? Players' database, German Cup results, video text links, Info on Bundesliga email lists . . . seemingly the world of German football on line, even the odd stab at a bit of humour! Whatever next?

To Turkey and back quicker than Mike Marsh. There are three Galatasaray sites – welcome to hell on line. There's a match report on their latest game, a 3-1 home defeat to Besiktas despite the presence of the brilliant Hakan Sukur. 'The game was lost in midfield,' it reads. And defence by the looks of it. No sign of Saunders in the team list. No 'Chop Souey' headlines either . . . yet.

Further afield still and you can tap into computers in America, where there are 27 item headings on the menu and enough information for you to make an extended stay. Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador (where you can find *El IDOLO* magazine on-line and read all about their very own and much beloved FC Barcelona), Peru, Mexico . . . Many of the South American sites don't give English translations but there is always an email address so you can overcome language barriers with a little persistence.

Closer to home, there is at least one site (or home page) for every Premiership club. Some of them are officially approved by the clubs and through these you can order your team's merchandise on-line. If you like a good rip-off. They vary in quality.

One of the better ones is the Newcastle home page, which provides news, match reports, results, even a David Ginola picture gallery! Some are pretty awful but then you are unlikely to bother going there unless you are a fan of the particular club, in which case you probably are used to the odd disappointment.

These sites certainly come in handy for supporters based overseas, particularly those following clubs lower down in the leagues where, again, most are covered on the Internet, providing match reports and results at least.

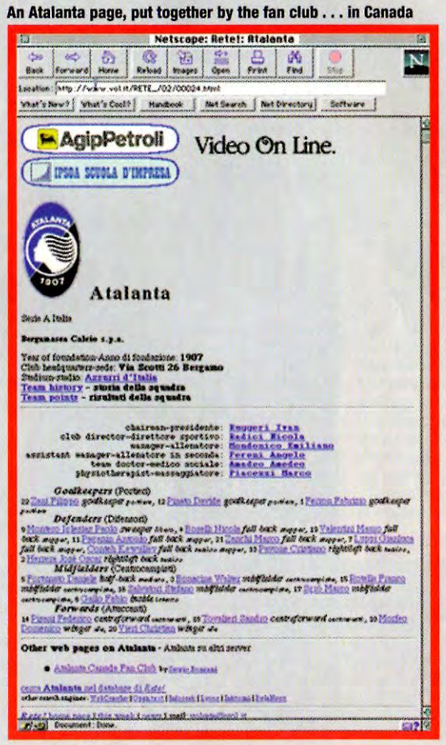
The two best stop-off points for an overall view of Premiership football on the Internet are the *Daily Mail*'s Soccernet and FA Carling Premier Net. The latter took its time delivering the goods but with the Premier League sponsors on board there is no shortage of ideas.

On a more general note the worldwide web soccer library – that's effectively what it is – has a whole host of competitions, fantasy football, a classic soccer shirt site, a gallery of classic programmes, women's soccer world, games, more and more statistics . . . FIFA and UEFA even have official home pages! It's quite a ride.

So where does it all go from here? Is this the beginning of the end for magazines and newspapers? Maybe, but not for some time. Interactive multimedia doesn't leave an awful lot to the imagination whereas the written word does. But there is an irreversible move towards a digital world, and television for one will change beyond all recognition in an effort to claw back some of the millions of viewers lost to computers and the Internet, where the choice and interactive opportunities for the individual are infinitely greater.

On-line publishing will take off as newspapers and magazines begin to see the effects that a wider audience has in terms of increased advertising rates and, yes, football will play a big part.

An Atalanta page, put together by the fan club . . . in Canada



Five sites worth seeing

1) The Association of Football Statisticians
(http://carlton.innotts.co.uk/~Soccerstats/) A British-based group of soccer enthusiasts with unique databases of information on the world game – a statistician's dream!

2) PSV Voetball
(http://www.stack.urc.urc.nl/~jorgen/psv.html) As good as any for a look at Dutch football, with links to other sites, match reports – don't look Leeds fans – and results. Not bad.

3) The unofficial Dallas Burn Fan home page
(http://www.metronet.com/~dustin/mls/) A fair reflection of America's soccer sites in that it talks a good game. There is one article suggesting Matt Le Tissier has made his mind up to join MLS having falling for a certain blonde bombshell in Texas . . .

4) Soccernet
(http://www.soccernet.com) The place to for British football, certainly for the Premiership. All the clubs are covered in detail and the site also focusses on the FA Cup and Euro '96. The *Daily Mail*'s site is updated several times daily.

5) Thomas's Australian soccer page
(http://www.zeta.org.au/~algor/soccerroo/html) The best from Down Under, with Socceroo match reports, a look at overseas Aussies, fanzine material and details of seasons past and present.

Surfing USA . . . the 'unofficial' Dallas Burn home page

THE INTERNET

What is the Internet?
The Internet is basically a worldwide network of computer networks, diverse enough to include those of Government departments, universities and large corporations through to non-profit organisations.

History
The internet started, after a fashion, in 1969 when a US defence department looked for a way to exchange military research information between its sites. A network of four computers was established and by 1972 this number had grown to 37. As the network grew there was also change in the way in which it was being used; no longer was it just there for the exchange of information but now its users were talking together through electronic mail. By 1984 the National Science Foundation the NSFNET, with five supercomputer centres available to any education facility. By 1987 the network had been given the once-over again, with faster telephone lines and computers, and at the turn of this decade the Internet became accessible to anyone with the teams to connect.

What can you do on the Internet?
There are five main sections:
1 Electronic mail
This is the most used function. Email is a fast, efficient way to send documents and messages and is not restricted to words – images, sounds and the most detailed of computer programmes can be sent in an instant to the other side of the world.
2 Information browsing and the World Wide Web
There are applications which simplify searching and retrieving in the above mentioned networks.

The most popular way to 'surf' the internet is using the World Wide Web (WWW), which is a hypertext based system enabling you to browse at your leisure. Various programmes are available which make easy the process of finding exactly what it is you're after (see box opposite for examples).
3 Socialising
Social interaction via computers may sound odd, but why not? Usenet is a system which enables free participation in discussion groups and 'newsgroups'.
4 File transfer
The Internet is inundated with files – such as documents, pictures, sounds – and file transfer protocol (FTP) allows you to move these with ease, making the Internet one huge shareware library.
5 Using other computers
Through the Internet you are effectively given the go-ahead to use computers from all over the world, with your own computer acting as a terminal on that particular network. Via your local service provider (see below) you can be connected to a system in, say, South Africa, at the cost of a local call!

What do you need to get started
1. A computer – most will do.
2. A modem – a device that converts computer data into sound so it can be transmitted down a telephone line.
3. A telephone line.
4. Communications software – such as Windows. Will often come with your modem. If not, ask at a shareware library.
5. Internet service provider – the key link without which you can't get connected to the Internet. Most common is a deal-in provider which has a permanent connection itself and allows you, the subscriber, to phone in and use that line.

It doesn't have to be your own system, of course, as there are a growing number of libraries, 'cyber cafes' and the like where you can use their facilities. The number of Internet users is increasing at 10 per cent per month and if this rate of growth were to continue – it cannot, of course – then by the year 2003 it would exceed the world's population.

ITALY

Weah sweeps the board

Paddy Agnew on more awards for George Weah, pitch problems for Milan and praise for Fiorentina

THE past, present and immediate future of Liberia and Milan striker George Manneh Oppong Weah dominated Italian soccer's entry into the New Year.

Even before it was officially confirmed that he had won *France Football*'s European Player of the Year award, Weah was already under attack from critics arguing that players such as team-mate Paolo Maldini or *WORLD SOCCER*'s winner Gianluca Vialli of Juventus, or indeed a representative of the all-conquering Ajax and Holland school (Overmars, Kluivert) would have proved a more worthy winner.

As soon as he picked up that same award, prior to Milan's home game with Sampdoria, Weah was again the centre of speculation. Italian critics immediately began to wonder about the effect his three-week absence for the African Nations Cup might have on Milan's title challenge.

Just prior to his departure for South Africa, Weah again made headlines when making a nationwide radio appeal to his native Liberia in order that the necessary funds might be found to enable his country compete in the South African finals. Weah also put his money where his mouth is, committing his own resources to Liberia's first ever appearance in an African Nations Cup finals competition.

Although part of his family live in New York, where he is the owner of two apartments and a restaurant, Weah continues to take an active interest in Liberian affairs, founding and owning his own club, the Junior Professionals, there, "as a way of giving kids the chances that I had myself, inspiring them to believe in the future and improve their lives through sport".

While Weah was uttering such fine thoughts, Milan were worrying about how best to compensate for the absence of a player whose six League goals, pre-Christmas, have already prompted favourable comparisons with a previous club idol, Dutch striker Marco Van Basten.

Milan could not easily replace Weah, but they could do something about the dreadful condition of their home San Siro pitch which this season, as every year since the 1990 World Cup, has cut up rough and uneven. Team coach Fabio Capello believes that the pitch was responsible for consecutive home draws with Napoli and Torino at the end of 1995. Accordingly, the club splashed out nearly £150,000 to have the pitch returfed with sods brought all the way from Bordeaux.

Since stadium renovations were carried out for the 1990 World Cup, the San Siro pitch has sparked consistent controversy being returfed no less than 10 times. Nor is the latest touch-up considered anything more than a temporary measure, with a fullscale revamp still a possiblity for this summer.

If the San Siro pitch did not help Milan's cause in home draws, the same excuse could not apply to their 2-2 away draw with Fiorentina on the last day of 1995. That match proved, if anything, that the title contest may be enriched by a fourth contestant to join the select band of Milan, Juventus and Parma.

Fiorentina may not win the 1995-96 championship but that draw with Milan suggests that they could have a major say in the destination of the title. With Argentinian striker Gabriel Batistuta in such form – he leads the scoring charts with 10 goals – that the Fiorentina fans have erected a statue to him at the Artemio Franchi stadium; with Francesco Baiano returning to form; and with the attacking skills of Portugal's Rui Costa and the solidity of Swede Stefan Schwarz providing a perfect midfield blend, the Fiorentina of 1996 could be very useful.

Angel Gabriel . . . Fiorentina's tribute to Batistuta

Schwarz appears to have settled well in Florence. Fellow Swede, Roma's Jonas Thern, says: "He's an inspirational figure on the field, a player who always wants to win, who never gives up."

Two sides also looking to the New Year with particular enthusiasm are Torino and Bari, who both changed coaches in December.

Francesco Scoglio took over from Nedo Sonnetti at Torino, following a 5-0 derby thrashing by Juventus, while Giuseppe Materazzi was replaced at Bari by Eugenio Fascetti following a 3- 1 home defeat by Sampdoria.

Fascetti began his new job in disastrous fashion, being drubbed 7-1 by Cremonese. A subsequent draw with Parma and an away win against Udinese recouped that poor start. Scoglio did better with Torino, picking up a win against Piacenza and draws with Milan, no less, and Cremonese in his first three outings.

Both Torino and Bari began 1996 in the relegation zone, but both are likely to play their way up the table, leaving teams such as Piacenza, Cremonese, Padova, Udinese, Vicenza and Cagliari to fight over the four relegation spots.

SPAIN

Catalan clash

Graham Turner on a highly-charged meeting of Barcelona and neighbours Espanyol at Nou Camp

THE Spanish habit of describing Real Madrid v Barcelona or any other Big Match as 'el derby' – or even 'el derbi' – has distorted the term to such an extent that purists must have breathed a deep sigh of satisfaction when 1996 kicked off with a Big Match that, as a derby, was definitely the Real McGonzalez: third-placed Barcelona entertaining second-placed Espanyol at Nou Camp.

The placings were a motive for raising eyebrows. But Espanyol, with 19 points won at Sarria and 19 away, could claim to have been more consistent than a Barcelona side who had secured 23 points at home but had scraped 12 of 27 possibles in away fixtures.

A glance at the Espanyol squad fails to discover a single current Spanish international, and those tempted to focus on Romanian Florin Raducioiu in the search for a star should bear in mind that he had played one full game (plus eight incomplete games) in the entire season, scoring four goals. He wasn't fit for 'el derbi' either.

The squad had cost unsalted peanuts in comparison with Barca coach Cruyff's £10m summer spending spree. Furthermore, Espanyol are £50m in debt, condemned to sell the stadium and obliged to work on an annual budget which Barcelona can multiply by four. 'El derbi' should have been a foregone – or even five-gone – conclusion.

But even though ticket prices of up to £68 reduced the presence of Espanyol fans, it had the whole of Catalunya heaving with an excitement rarely experienced since the epic battles between the Barca of Venables and Clemente's Espanyol in the mid-1980s.

The *frisson* was down to a special set of circumstances. Espanyol seemed to have the wind in their sails and Barca seemed to be pooped.

Attitudes on opposite pavements of the Diagonal, Barcelona's main road, were reflected by New Year plans. Espanyol coach Camacho gave his Budgies two days off. Cruyff had his players in on New Year's Eve and New Year's morning. Espanyol were cruising along while Barcelona were mending punctures.

Atletico Madrid were to blame. Their 3-1 demolition of an impoverished Barcelona in December – it could have been seven – had inflicted the sort of psychological wounds which stem not so much from defeat but the manner of defeat.

Cruyff's team were simply played off the park and accusing fingers within both dressing and boardrooms were surreptitiously levelled at the maestro. He played five across the back and ordered man-to-man marking on the five players whom he regarded as key-holders to Atletico's success.

One abject performance, of course, is not a motive for massive tearing-out of hair. But this was another drop into a very full glass and another straw on a straining camel's back. Hagi pulled a thigh muscle during training on New Year's eve – Barca's 28th injury in four months.

Training methods were questioned, hurdling was banned, the state of the training pitch at La Masis was criticised, and psychosis set in.

Worse still, the fallen mighty included Jordi Cruyff.

Those who reported that Guus Hiddink would press him into action for Holland against the Irish in the Anfield play-off were obviously unaware that Cruyff Junior had not kicked a ball in the League since September 24.

A routine cartilage op provoked unexpected complications due, according to the club's medical staff, to his bow legs. After a couple of relapses, Cruyff Senior insisted on a second opinion (in France), a third (in Madrid), a fourth (USA) and a fifth (Barcelona). He thus exposed himself to allegations that other squad members would not have been afforded the same treatment.

The next straw was that the fifth opinion differed from the previous four and belonged to Dr Rafael Gonzalez Adrio, club doctor during Cruyff's playing days, golf partner and family friend.

Adrio was the man who had reacted to Ronald Koeman's ruptured Achilles tendon with a press release claiming he would perform the op, thus sparking off a night of the long scalpels in the operating theatre. The Cruyffs' decision to ignore four diagnoses and allow Adrio to go ahead with a second cartilage operation on Jordi was the perfect way to drive a stake into the heart of the club's medical services.

Johan then suffered his third severe bout of flu this season; the side were beaten 1-0 by a Sevilla team stripped by suspension of strikers Suker and Moya; and when he reappeared in the conference room in the New Year it was only to nod in agreement while the club's Press Officer announced there would be no more pre-match statements from the boss, thus allowing the board to refuel the theory that he is shirking his responsibilities. The image he transmitted was that of a man who is thoroughly fed up.

While Espanyol were quietly preparing for 'el derbi', Barcelona seemed to be butting the dressing-room wall shouting "we godda win, we godda win".

They did, in the second minute of injury time in the most amazing of matches. During the first half they prevented Espanyol from playing their way out of defence and took the lead when Miguel Angel Nadal toe-poked in the second corner of the game, taken by Robbie Prosinecki.

The Croatian midfielder, playing wide on the right, ran the Espanyol defence ragged with some beautiful touch play – until Cruyff ordered him to switch wings.

Espanyol re-emerged strongly after the break, eqaulised through substitute Goran Bogdanovic in the 68th minute and then contrived to miss chance after chance after chance – especially after Barca's Little Buddha, Ivan de la Pena, played Silly Buddhas and got himself sent off for kicking out at Sebastian Herrera nine minutes from time.

It was, again, Prosinecki who stole the show, and the points, by pulling a cross back to the penalty spot, allowing sub Oscar Garcia to sweep home a surprising and fortunate winner which at least allowed Cruyff's team to stay within sight of Atletico who, 24 hours earlier, had won 3-1 in Salamanca.

Such a bleak attitude was not justified by a look at the League table. Arch-rivals Real Madrid, Deportivo and Valencia were in much more dire straits 14, 15 and 12 points off the lead.

Real saw in the New Year with a peculiar storm in a wine-glass. Michel Laudrup, of all people, was accused of nipping off to Copenhagen, to look after his wine business, without the club's permission. He responded that he would not accept being treated like a slave.

The crackers were duly papered over, but veteran midfielder Michel had meanwhile criticised coach Valdano for his public comments. Obviously Laudrup does not drink from the same communion cup as his manager. For the first match of 1996, against Valladolid, neither Laudrup nor Michel was on the lsit of 16.

Antonio Gomez was. Never heard of him? Neither had anybody else. At 22 he was striving valiantly to emulate his idol Michel on the right flank of the reserve midfield. When the transfer market was reopened in mid-December, both Oviedo and Albacete had a sniff, but Gomez turned up his nose and said he wanted to succeed at Real.

Within 10 days he had been invited to train with the first-team squad and he followed Raul, Alvaro and Guti along the rejuvenation path opened up by Valdano.

Talking about the mid-season transfer market, not even the Bosman ruling sparked off a glut of signings. Real possibly made the most relevant acquisition by taking goalscoring inside-forward Defan 'Rambo' Petkovic on loan from Red Star Belgrade, with an option to buy at the end of the season.

After months of unaccustomed scoring problems, Zaragoza have boosted their attacking options by taking two Argentinians, former team-mates at Independiente. Sebastian Rambert is on loan from Internazionale, and Gustavo Lopez was signed, but only after his price had been cut and an insurance company had agreed to cover what the doctors described as "an unusually high risk of knee injury".

RUSSIAN INTERNATIONAL Viktor Onopko ***(pictured left)*** finally appeared in Oviedo after FIFA had ruled that his contract with the club was fully valid and that Atletico Madrid therefore had no claims on him.

Nearly 40,000 fans turned out to give the former Spartak Moscow skipper Onopko a rousing welcome in Oviedo, yet he played no part in the year's opening home fixture against Deportivo.

The reason this time? He could not get a visa for his mother-in-law . . .

FRANCE Exiles may miss Euro '96

Andre Duclos on why Cantona and Ginola fail to impress national coach Aime Jacquet

CONFUSION may lie behind Aime Jacquet's extraordinary outburst over Eric Cantona and David Ginola.

Jacquet, who managed against all the previous odds to qualify his France team for the finals of Euro' 96, exploded: "We have monitored their production rates and their technical contributions, and I have to say that the conclusions are very different from the inflated and exaggerated reports coming from the English.

"I have heard Ginola say that English people could not understand him being left out. I'm not here to please the English."

But without these two stars, can Jacquet continue to please the French? All very well to lean back and be happily philosophical after our team had so unexpectedly and impressively won 3-1 in Bucharest. Even without Cantona, who had not been in contention, and Ginola, injured, France surpassed themselves, and well deserved their win. Who needed the 'English' pair?

The game against Israel in Caen which followed was another matter. A 2-0 French win, yet, but grimly gained against an Israeli side probably unlucky to lose. There were a number of very disappointing French performances, not least by a player whose power, versatility and drive had been so important in Bucharest: Christian Karembeu.

He was again used in midfield, and was a forlorn figure. Without his forceful play, the French midfield will not function. Far from being one of the best players that day he was probably the worst.

Fortunately Desailly, operating at centre-back rather than in midfield, was in dominant form, and Lama's goalkeeping was thoroughly sound.

Otherwise, only Youri Djorkaeff truly distinguished himself. Five goals in his last four internationals and all-round attacking midfield play of such high quality has meant that, at 27, he finally has established himself.

His father Jean won 48 caps, while Youri still has only 13. He says he has never doubted himself, whatever anyone else might have said, and that in moving to from Monaco Paris Saint-Germain this season he has taken a big step forward "because people urge me to take responsibilities."

After the win in Caen, Jacquet and Djorakaeff embraced. Jacquet knows how much he owes to Youri, whose extraordinary free-kick saved the day, and probably Aime's skin, against Poland.

"That goal changed everything," says Djorkaeff. "That day, I overcame the selector's doubts. A relation of confidence was built between us. I was no longer the same, either in his eyes or those of the public, or of other players."

Djorkaeff *pere* says: "Youri has the image of an artist. The problem is that too much is asked of him. They wanted him to be as effective in defence as in attack. But he hadn't the necessary maturity. For two or three years, he's made constant progress. Which doesn't mean he will ever be a Vincent Guerin."

So: could the much improved Youri co-exist with Cantona?This must surely be the key question. Indeed, Cantona's choice or omission is essentially a tactical matter, whereas in Ginola's case it seems to be one of personality.

Those who have seen Cantona with Manchester United recently have extolled his marvellous flair and technique, but to pull him in would mean Jacquet having radically to re-think tactics.

Not so with Ginola, if he played on the left flank, as he is doing at Newcastle. Jacquet probably fears that Ginola might disturb the camaraderie, the psychological profile, of his squad.

It's no easy problem for a coach. No doubt his English opposite number, Terry Venables, would love to have both.

Guingamp, the promoted Breton team, continue to surprise everyone, not least such opponents as Nantes, Auxerre and PSG. The team is based on a solid, stubborn defence but Stephane Carnot, scorer of both goals in the 2-1 win at Auxerre, says: "We don't only defend. With us, there's entertainment. It's easier for us to express ourselves at this level, because the play is more fluid."

Main man . . . Youri Djorkaeff is now a key player for France

Belgium

Unlucky seven for Rene

THE casualty list among coaches in the Belgian First Division claimed its seventh victim when Beveren parted company with 48-year-old Rene Desaeyere, who had been with them for only a season.

His successor is a Serb, Dimitri Davidovic, who had been coaching Kispest Honved in Budapest but has spent the greater part of his career in Belgium. He made his mark as a player with Lierse, and then coached Antwerp, Lokeren and Beerschot.

The threat of relegation cost Desaeyere his job. With no wish to repeat their demotion of 1990 – a season later Beveren came back as champions – the club acted swiftly. "We are still waiting for a return of the good times of 20 years ago," said club administrator Koen Van Hal.

Within two days of his appointment, Davidovic saw Slovenian Saso Udovic give his new team a 1-1 draw against Charleroi with an 85th-minute equaliser. But the coach made no secret of the fact that he would be spending the mid-season break improving the team. Their first game back, on January 19, is a Cup-tie against Club Brugge, the holders.

Brugge, who went into the New Year with a two-point lead over the champions, Anderlecht, had made terribly hard work of their Cup game against Third Division Poderlee. In front of a hostile crowd in the Olympic Stadium, they eventually prevailed through a late disputed penalty from Lorenzo Staelens.

Gent were not so fortunate, succumbing 2-1 to the Second Division leaders Lokeren.

NICHOLAS HARLING

Switzerland

Hodgson departs

AS expected, Roy Hodgson, the English coach of Switzerland's national team, did not survive long in his part-time capacity. Having moved to Internazionale he could not really be expected to devote all his energies to the Swiss job, and he was replaced by the much-travelled Portuguese coach Artur Jorge.

He does not know Swiss football well, but he has more international experience than Hodgson and speaks six languages: all three official ones used in Switzerland – German, Italian, and French – plus English, Spanish and his native Portuguese.

The Swiss are delighted with his capture and now look forward with renewed optimism to the European Championship finals.

The 3-1 defeat by England at Wembley was dismissed as an irrelevance. The Swiss took the field without eight squad candidates: Chapuisat, Yakin, Vogel, Thuler, Subiat, Zuberbuhler, Herr and Bickel, who turned down the invitation. So much for the English assertion that it is every footballer's dream to play at Wembley!

Having reached their goal, the Euro '96 finals, the visitors appered to lack concentration and total commitment. They seldom tackled at full stretch and they incurred the first foul after 33 minutes! "On 15 June England will confront a quite different Swiss outfit," opined the Swiss media.

In the championship, Grasshopper were top at the break, followed by Sion and Neuchatel Xamax, while Lausanne (for only the second time), Lugano, FC Zurich and Young Boys were all condemned to the relegation/promotion pool.

A shock for Zurich: their top scorer Urs Guntersperger has been jailed for three months for drink driving.

ARTHUR ROTMIL

GERMANY Year ends on a low

THE national team ended 1995 with a disappointing 0-0 draw against South Africa in Johannesburg. It was the first meeting between the two countries and it attracted 30,000 spectators.

The Germans were severely handicapped by the absence of 10 players: Scholl, Babbel, Freund, Basler, Sammer, Herrlich, Ziege, Strunz, Kahn and Eilts all cried off because of injury or illness. Lothar Matthaus, who returned to action with Bayern Munich in November following a long injury lay-off, was not yet considered for selection.

The year's record of the national side reads: won seven, drew three and lost only once (to Bulgaria).

Jurgen Klinsmann can look back on a highly satisfactory six months back in German football. He has been scoring freely in the UEFA Cup, hitting 11 of Bayern's 16 goals, while in the national team he was again top scorer. But in the Bundesliga he only got six, exactly half of those by the leading trio of Dahlin (Borussia Monchengladbach), Bobic and Elber (both Stuttgart).

Klinsmann explains the startling discrepancy in his scoring exploits with the fact that Bayern play differently in European games than in the Bundesliga: "Our midfield tends to bunch together when put under pressure," he moans. "Perhaps our players concentrate on defence too much and don't provide the same service to front players in League matches." he insists.

The first phase of the League programme brought average gates of over 30,000 per match, the highest in Europe. Bayern topped the statistics with 60,500; they need 35,000 to break even. They were again followed by champions Borussia Dortmund, on 42,609.

Dortmund were heading the table at the break, two points clear of Bayern. Both these clubs are still in European competition, while Borussia Monchengladbach are in the Cup-winners Cup. This trio will tackle the quarter-finals in March, handicapped to some extent by the competitive lay-off.

But the winter break doesn't mean that they are all resting. An extensive programme of indoor tournaments and foreign tours keeps the players fit.

Among the pros who made an impact this season are Stuttgart's striker Fredi Bobic, Andy Moller (Dortmund) and the veterans Rudi Voller (Bayer Leverkusen) and Lothar Matthaus (Bayern); of the managers Felix Magath (Hamburger SV) and Frank Pagelsdorf (Hansa Rostock).

The negative impressions were made by Mario Basler (Werder Bremen), Bruno Labbadia (Koln), Andy Herzog (Bayern), Darko Pancev (Fortuna Dusseldorf) and Bernd Schuster (Leverkusen); among managers Winfried Schafer (Karlsruher SC) and Friedel Rausch (Kaiserslautern).

The club facing the worst crisis, Werder Bremen, slumped to 15th in the table. There are high hopes that Croatian Davor Suker, who is negotiating a move from Spain's Sevilla, could change their fortunes. He might yet save team boss Aad de Mos from an early sacking.

ARTHUR ROTMIL

Bernd backs out

Arthur Rotmil on the rebel planning a lucrative exit from the Bundesliga

GERMANY'S most controversial rebel, Bernd Schuster, now 36, nearly pensioned off, still occasionally brilliant, but often temperamental, is again on the move.

The managerial change at Bayer Leverkusen, where the authoritarian Erich Ribbeck took over last April from Dragoslav Stepanovic, has blighted the comeback of midfielder Schuster, whose turbulent career can now hardly be continued in the Bundesliga.

German football has had its share of rebellious players. Names such as Paul Breitner, Stefan Effenberg and the two goalkeepers Harald Schumacher and Uli Stein spring to mind – but there was no-one quite like Schuster.

The final showdown exploded when Leverkusen survived the quarter-final Cup tie against the amateur club Lok Altmark Stendal only by a penalty shoot-out.

Schuster's performance, which earned the worst marks from match reporters, was dismissed by Ribbeck as "totally unacceptable". Leverkusen general manager Reiner Calmund fumed: "Schuster's attitude was frankly appalling and this cannot be tolerated."

But the "misunderstood" star accused the coach: "I felt from the beginning that Ribbeck eyed me more critically than the other players. He never had confidence in me and he did not hesitate to relegate me to the reserve bench."

His team-mates though, saw it differently. On Ribbeck's recommendation they voted by 13-0 to oust Schuster as team captain and to replace him with another veteran, Rudi Voller.

"I knew that would happen," complained Schuster. "The cowards are afraid to stand up to the dictatorial coach. I am all alone in this predicament."

The Cup match at Altmark Stendal was Schuster's last in Leverkusen's colours. He was suspended internally and expelled from the squad, no longer allowed to train with them. The punishment followed his threat to sue the club for damage to his reputation and "sufferance" money.

His quarrels with the coach over his position in the team and with the general manager over his criticisms have led to an irreversible split. Now Schuster just wants to leave.

He is a devoted family man, often portrayed in the media as arrogant and a loner, and as an egotist who puts his own interests first and foremost.

Schuster was first capped at 19, but after playing 21 internationals he fell out with the management and swore he "will never again play for the national team".

True to his word he did not, despite pleas from Jupp Derwall and Franz Beckenbauer, the then national team bosses. Last season Schuster played so well that the current coach, Berti Vogts, contemplated a recall. Schuster was ready, but his age was against him.

Vogts said: "I wouldn't be doing Bernd any favours by picking him now and then dropping him in the European Championship finals because he wouldn't last three games in a week."

Schuster claims he was hounded by the media when he left Germany in 1980 to embark on a highly-successful 13-year spell in Spain with Barcelona, Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid. He vowed that he "would never return to German football", but later did so when he joined Leverkusen.

Now the break seems complete.

Many fans have not forgiven him for cashing in on the European Championship triumph of 1980, following which he skipped the country to seek richer pastures abroad, and for walking out on the national side when they needed him most.

"I have been a professional for over 17 years," explains Schuster, "and I have to look where I can get the best deal."

Leverkusen may now have to dig deep into their coffers to pay him off for the two years outstanding on his contract.

"I have had offers from several clubs," he says, though the negotiations have so far been fruitless. "Of course, I am too old for Real Madrid or Barcelona, but I would go anywhere to continue my career.

"For the past decade I had a clause in my contract which allows me to move between clubs without any transfer fee. But the next club I sign for will have to guarantee me a first-team place."

Austria

Rapid run out of gas

RAPID VIENNA, Austria's only European quarter-finalists and at one stage clear favourites to win the championship for the first time in eight years, slumped in the closing phase of the season's first half.

A 2-0 home defeat by nearest challengers Stum Graz was followed by another 2-0 setback at Linzer ASK. Their lead has thus been cut dramatically, after the two hammer blows within 48 hours, to a mere two points.

The first victim of the Bosman case was FC Tirol striker Harald Cerny, who was set to join 1860 Munich, first on loan for £115,000 and then next July permanently for £650,000. A spokesman for the German club explained: "Why should we pay a fee? In July Cerny will become a free agent and cost us only the signing-on bonus."

An unusual row blighted the match between Vorwarts Steyr and LASK. The visitors raced to a 2-0 lead only for the floodlights to partially fail. The referee took the teams off and waited half an hour, then after consultation with the FA decided to carry on. But the Vorwarts players refused to complete the match. The FA punished the club by awarding the game to LASK by 3-0.

ARTHUR ROTMIL

Europe

Republic of Ireland

Ten good years, eight sad days

JACK CHARLTON tainted a memorable decade as Republic of Ireland manager by staying in the job eight days too long.

Big Jack should have quit after the play-off defeat by Holland at Anfield. Instead the 60-year-old 'Honorary Irishman' hung around for over a week before he was pushed into retirement by five brave FAI officials who told him to his face that it was time to go.

There are conflicting reports of that crucial meeting between Charlton and the FAI at a sports complex near Dublin Airport and we are sure to get his views in a book he intends to write.

Now the FAI are busy head-hunting prospective managers, and an appointment should be ratified in time for the World Cup fixtures meeting on January 23.

Former Irish captain Mick McCarthy and Wimbledon's Joe Kinnear are the favourites, but the clever money is on Kenny Dalglish. Charlton will be a difficult act to follow, and we are unlikely to see anybody holding the job for 10 years, as he did.

Anfield farewell . . . Jack hits the road

The highlight of this season's FAI Harp Lager Cup should be the meeting of Cup experts Shamrock Rovers and their arch Dublin rivals, Shelbourne, at the RDS.

Two non-League clubs are guaranteed a place in the second round. Wayside Celtic and Cherry Orchard are drawn together, as are Avondale and CYM Terenure.

At the half-way stage of a very competitive Premier Division, St Patrick's Athletic were the leaders, attracting large crowds to their Friday games. Another Dublin club, Bohemians, are having one of their best seasons for some time, while Sligo Rovers and Dundalk are keeping the provincial flag flying.

Cherry Orchard struck a blow for schoolboy football when UEFA ordered Coventry City to pay £150,000 compensation for the signing of Irish schoolboy Barry Prenderville. Up to now many English clubs got boys from Irish clubs for the price of a few footballs or a playing kit!

SEAN CREEDON

Sweden

IFK still look to the future

IFK GOTHENBURG, fresh from another League title, are already planning for the future with three major signings.

They have snapped up stopper Teddy Lucic (Vastra Frolunda) and midfielders Nicklas Alexandersson (Halmstad) and Andreas Andersson (Degersfors).

Lucic and Andersson are full internationals, while Andersson is seen as one of Sweden's top prospects.

IFK had been after Lucic, a non-playing member of Sweden's World Cup squad, for over a year, and beat Crystal Palace to his signature.

IFK's new coach, Mats Jingblad, failed to get his former star pupil at Halmstad, Nicklas Gudmundsson, who went on to play on loan for Blackburn.

Norrkoping and Oster, two classic names of the local game, have promised to spend heavily after securing their places among the elite through play-offs.

Norrkoping have loaned goalkeeper Lasse Eriksson to Belgium's Charleroi and replaced him with Dick Last.

Malmo have signed former League top scorer Nicklas Kindvall from Hamburg to replace Jorgen Pettersson, sold to Borussia Monchengladbach.

Midfielder Jons Thern, unable to win a first-team place at Roma, is thinking of coming home, but Robert Prytz, now 35, who was said to be retiring to Scotland – to play golf, he said – has instead joined Switzerland's Young Boys, a club he graced ten years ago.

PENTTI HIETANEN

Holland

Muhren's the man to help Hiddink

GUUS HIDDINK, manager of Holland, believes the draw for the European Championship final stages was good for the Dutch.

Easy? No, certainly not. Hiddink knows that. But, as he says: "Playing against Scotland, Switzerland and England will allow us to play our normal game – and that is a game of football. No names, but against some countries we would have to change our tactics.

"Our first two games will be vital for us to get used to the tournament. But with respect for Scotland and Switzerland, the third game against England at Wembley is going to be the tough one. It's a home game for England, and the atmosphere at Wembley is special."

Hiddink could call in Arnold Muhren, who played at Wembley in the 1983 FA Cup Final, and replay, for Manchester United. After those games, he said: "You can't describe Wembley. Only when you're coming through that tunnel on to the pitch do you realise what it's really like."

Maybe Patrick Kluivert, the brilliant young striker who did the scoring damage against Charlton's Irish army in that never-to-be forgotten deciding game, could ask Muhren for personal advice.

Kluivert faces an uncertain 1996 after being told he faces a possible jail sentence for his involvement in a fatal car crash last September.

Either way, if you meet Hiddink and the Dutch at Villa Park, at Wembley, or at the country club where the Dutch squad will be based during the championships, you will not need any extra advice or evidence that Holland are taking things very seriously, although the absence from Euro '96 of Ajax winger Marc Overmars (damaged knee ligaments) will worry Hiddink.

Ajax moved swiftly to relplace Overmars, signing Peter Hoekstra from PSV Eindhoven.

One person who will take things seriously – off the pitch of course – is Crown Prince Willem Alexander, photographed at Anfield with the Dutch flag and his arms around Kluivert afterwards.

Hiddink has won a few friends with top Dutch clubs by insisting that although friendly games will be organised before Euro '96 none will be played during March.

As Hiddink explains: "I learned during my time as a club coach that March can be a very important period for European Cups."

In March, Ajax (UEFA Champions League), Feyenoord (Cup-winners Cup) and PSV (UEFA Cup) are all engaged in quarter-finals. Hardly the time to think about friendly games, for Holland or not!

ERIC NICHOLLS

Car trouble . . . Patrick Kluivert

Portugal

Autuori takes a giant step

BRAZILIAN Paulo Autuori is to be the new coach of Benfica, but we wonder if he knows what he is taking on.

Autuori, 39, has just led Botafogo to their first Brazilian national championship. The celebrations in Rio were still going on when Benfica announced that he would become their third coach this season, replacing Mario Wilson, who in turn had replaced Artur Jorge, now in charge of the Swiss national squad.

Before that, Jorge had taken over from Toni, who has now returned to Benfica with the title of Football Director. He was under orders to find a new coach and found Artuori, who had been with Maritimo (twice) and Guimaraes before going to Botafoga.

The change kept the Lisbon Eagles in the headlines, for a more palatable reason than an earlier incident, when agents of the Portuguese CID visited the club.

The investigations concern The Russian Case, in which there are rumours of illegalities concerning the transfer of three Soviet players, Yuran, Kulkov and Mostvoi, and a Mr Barbosa, allegedly a translator, but also a man with fingers in various footballing pies.

Portugal in general and Lisbon in particular have been full of various tales about Barbosa, Benfica and the players. The deal that took Isaias to Coventry City also was the subject of some speculation.

Rumours also have been circulating about 'Russian agents' who were said to have arrived in the city with the aim of buying back the players.

Mostvoi is now with French club Strasbourg, and Kulkov and Yuran are in Moscow, with Spartak. Portuguese authorities are trying to have Yuran extradited, after he had been involved in a fatal road accident.

Benfica are only third in the table, but they are still number one for news, even though they barred some reporters from the stadium after the police raid!

ALBERTO DA SILVA

Norway

Sad taste at the end

A SEASON that promised so much for so long finished very badly for Norwegian football.

Defeat in the final qualifier for Euro '96 meant that the national team bowed out, leaving Rosenborg with the task of defending the nation's football pride in the final group match of the Champions League.

Rosenborg looked to have a good chance to beat a depleted Blackburn side, but a pitiful performance made it possible for the English champions to stroll to a 4-1 victory.

Only the Steffen Iversen goal was worth remembering from this disappointing performance.

National team manager Egil Olsen took a squad of home-based youngsters from the other clubs to the Caribbean for a end-of-season tour.Tomorrow's men got some practice in a 1-1 draw against Jamaica and a 3-2 defeat against Trinidiad and Tobago.

Tore Andre Flo, younger brother of Jostein Flo attracted the interest of several foreign clubs in the autumn, but decided to continue his career in Norway, leaving northern club Tromso to play for Brann in Bergen.

Switzerland, Finland, Hungary and Azerbaijan are the other nations in Group 3 of the World Cup qualifiers, and Norway seem to have a good chance of progress.

SIGURD ODEGAARD

Wanted man . . . Tore Andre Flo

Turkey

Have faith in Fatih

NATIONAL coach Fatih Terim is happy with the draw for the European Championship. He is happy with the draw for the 1998 World Cup. He is happy with his players and his bosses.

All in all, Fatih is a happy man, thanks to faith. "I have faith in my squad and they have faith in me," he says. "I have faith in my system and so do they. Now they must think big before it is too late."

The fact that Terim's team qualified for both major tournaments surprised many people. The surprises may not be over.

The Turks must have a chance of making progress in the Euro contest, against Denmark, Portugal and Croatia. "We'll have a lot of support, and that's vital," says Terim. As for the World Cup, with Holland, Belgium, Wales and San Marino in the same group, he claims: "We will challenge Holland for first place in the group."

In the League, Trabzonspor led the table after 16 games, but lost 3-1 to Fenerbahce, now second after four straight wins.

If there is a close finish, Fenerbahce might have cause to blame a Vanspor fan who threw a stone that hit Trabzon keeper Nihat. The match was abandoned, and the TFF ruled that it should go into the records as a 5-0 win for Trabzon – who had been 5-1 up at the time. So the 'offical' victory gives them one extra goal.

Fenerbahce have done well to keep in the race despite a large number of injuries. Tarik, signed from Genclerbirligi, heads the list of those currently out of action.

Manager Carlos Alberto Parreira asked president Ali Sen if the club could afford a new midfielder. "Only a Christmas cake," was the unexpected reply.

Besiktas are third, eight points behind Trabzon, with Galatasaray another point back. They have Saunders out injured, Kubilay anxious to leave, and new goalkeeper Friedl making too many mistakes.

HASAN CEMALI

Happy man . . . national coach Fatih Terim

Malta

Ghedin quits national side

AFTER nearly four years at the helm of the Maltese national side, Italian coach Pietro Ghedin decided to call it a day.

"I am leaving due to family problems," said Ghedin. After the ill-fated efforts of the national side in the last Euro '96 qualifiers, in which Malta did not register a single win, the FA opted to give Ghedin another chance by offering him a further two-year contract – an offer he turned down.

With Malta drawn in one of the toughest European World Cup groups – with Spain, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Yugoslavia and the Faroe Islands – the local FA need to appoint a successor quickly.

On the domestic front, Valletta chairman Joe Caruana Curran has announced that his runaway leaders are in the process of becoming Malta's first club to turn professional. The news did not augur well for the Citizens – they surprisingly lost their 100 per cent record. A penalty by Doncic seven minutes from time saved the day against Naxxar Lions.

Sliema remain behind them three points adrift. They beat champions Hibernians 4-2 soon after the restart, drew 1-1 with Hamrun and trounced St Patrick 3-1. Poor Hibernians regained some of their composure with a 2-1 win over fellow strugglers Floriana.

DOMENICO AQUILINA

Israel

Hopes high for '98

NATIONAL coach Shlomo Scharf believes the national side have an outside chance of qualifying for the 1998 World Cup finals despite the presence of Russia and Bulgaria in Group 5 along with Cyprus and Luxembourg.

However, it will take a considerable upset if Israel are to travel to France in place of either of the favourites, and seeds, Russia and Bulgaria.

On the local scene, Betar Jerusalem clinched top spot in the National League at the halfway stage. A pack of four other sides were close behind.

The Jerusalem side squeezed ahead of former leaders Maccabi Tel Aviv on the last matchday before the winter break with an excellent 3-0 home win.

ORI LEWIS

Luxembourg

Paul stays in charge

NATIONAL team coach Paul Philipp is staying with Luxembourg until the year 2002.

The new deal was a little late in coming, because his current contract was as good as up, but it eventually arrived and Philipp took the challenge head on.

Avenir Beggen are having one of their worst seasons for over five years. Things finally came to a head for coach Jacky Perignon when Eeggen travelled to current leaders Grevenmacher and were 6-4. Immediately after the game the board sacked Perignon, and Theo Scholteon and Etienne Delangre are now taking care of first-team games. All this after Beggen won the double only one season previously.

Other managerial casualties include Joe Hansen (AR Petange) and Giulio Nezi (Red Boys) both struggling at the bottom of the table. No new coaches have yet been appointed.

At the mid-season break, Grevenmacher led from Jeunesse Esch, followed by Union Luxembourg and impressive new boys Rodange 91. Avenir stay fifth from bottom after being conceding six goals at home to Jeunesse.

TIM BRICE

Slovakia

Venues are a problem

'HALF-TIME' in the Slovak Republic came with the pairing in World Cup Group 6 against the Czech Republic.

The first official friendly between the two, a 1-1 draw, was played in Bratislava earlier in 1995. Now the planned return in the Czech Republic will be off, and dates discussed for the first competitive encounter in a group also including Yugoslavia and Spain. The chances look poor, but who knows?

With two games to go the Slovaks were still, just, in contention for the finals of Euro '96, a long shot in their first top international competition, after some topsy-turvy results, and it could happen again.

Where will the Czechs and Slovaks schedule the ties? The Letna has atmosphere but a much-reduced capacity, while the Rostock ground next to the main Strahov is almost certainly not a starter.

As to the Slovak 'home', will the SFZ ask the Czechs to play in distant Kosice, where results are good and capacity more than at the remodelled Telehne pole?

Probably both countries will opt for their capital city, for reasons of security, but what a squeeze it will be!

Pressure on space in grounds is not exactly a problem in the League, although crowds in Trnava are still way above the expectation when Karol Pecze took over Spartak in the summer of 1994 rather than continuing his career abroad.

Last season the White & Blacks from the brewing town a short drive from Bratislava missed a UEFA Cup place, but this winter they top the table a point ahead of Slovan.

On the last day of the 'Autumn championship' Slovan won 4-0 at promoted Nitra while Trnava scraped a point in a goalless draw at Dunajska Streda, where Pecze won the Slovak and Czechoslovak Cups in the mid-1980s. Now he has to maintain Trnava's form at a time when Slovan, back under Dusan Galis, look to be reviving.

Trnava plan a Central American break-time tour, and failing that they may play friendlies in Britain, for experience.

Sadly it looks a dullish second half for fans. Relegation is virtually decided and the only real question still open is whether Trnava can pip Slovan for the title. That would not be an unpopular outcome.

BOB VAUGHAN

Croatia

Ivic 'earthquake' upsets the national squad

DELIGHT at convincing qualification for the European Championships soon turned to disbelief when Tomislav Ivic lost his job with the national squad. The effects of this footballing earthquake are still being felt.

Ivic had been director in charge of selection for Croatia's teams at all levels, with Miroslav Blazevic acting as coach to the senior squad. Although Croatia headed their qualifying group for the tournament in England next summer, the pair had had frequent differences.

Now Ivic has paid the price for having too long a tongue. The national Federation has decided to do without him, and to bring in two other coaches to help Blazevic.

The decision upset many people, including a number of players – notably Zvonimir Boban, captain of the national team, who described it as "great stupidity".

Sacked . . . national coach Tomislav Ivic

Ivic promptly went to Dubai and signed an 18-month contract as director of soccer for the United Arab Emirates. He took two young coaches, Srecko Juricic and Zeljko Mijac, with him.

Blazevic and Ivic are agreed on one thing: that there is now an extraordinary generation of Croatian players, capable of achieving great results. But while Blazevic claims that "we are the best", Ivic says that the team's play did not merit first place in the qualifying table, and adds that "we are going to be ashamed of ourselves in England".

The Croatian Federation's view is that Blazevic deserved most of the credit for the team's success, and that Ivic's comments had been destructive and potentially damaging to the squad's hopes.

So Ivic, former coach of a string of clubs including Ajax, Anderlecht, Atletico Madrid, Porto, Benfica and Hajduk Split, takes up yet another job, with millions of his countrymen wondering if his departure will be a disaster.

Blazevic, who recently spent 17 days in prison after being arrested in connection with the Marseille fraud case – "I am innocent and I have proved it" – has now signed a contract keeping him with Croatia until after the 1998 World Cup finals in France.

Branko Ivankovic continues as assistant coach, in addition to his club job at Segesta Sisak, and two former club coaches have been recruited as the extra helpers – Ivan Katalinic, recently sacked by Hajduk Split, and Otto Baric, who used to be with Casino Salzburg.

Josko Jelicic, a midfielder with Croatia Zagbreb, is the latest player to go abroad. He has joined Sevilla for a £1.2 million fee, while Mladen Mladenovic has signed for J.League side Gamba Osaka. National team defender Slaven Bilic may join West Ham from Karlsruhe if he can obtain a work permit.

Davor Vugrinec, one of the most talented young players in the country, has a signed a lucrative new contract with Varteks Varazdin that will keep the 20-year-old forward with the club until the next century. The deal followed interest in the player from France (Nantes), Italy (Vicenza) and Germany (Bayern Munich).

Davor Suker was named Player of the Year by Croatian daily *Vecernji List*, with Zvonimir Boban second and Robert Prosinecki third.

ZDRAVKO REIC

Bosnia

Hadzibegic helps out

REBUILDING soccer in Bosnia-Herzegovina after the civil war is going to take a long time, but officials are hopeful that a team will be able to compete in the World Cup 1998 qualifiers.

Faruk Hadzibegic, one of the most popular players to come out of that area of the Balkans, is having a big say in the rebuilding now that he has a new job, as technical director of the national squad.

'Hadzi' still has a home in Sochaux, France, where he had several successful seasons as a player, but is planning to return to Sarajevo.

"Many of our young players have gone abroad as a result of the civil war, and we will need a few years to regroup. But we remain optimistic," he said.

Bosnian players now abroad include Meho Kodro (Barcelona), Mirza Varesanovic (Bordeaux), Admir Smajic (Basle), Mehmed Bazdarevic (Sochaux), and Emir Bolic (Fenerbahce). Hadzibegic hopes to also use players who represented Croatia at junior international level.

The World Cup draw put Bosnia in the same group as neighbouring Croatia and Slovenia, as well as Denmark and Greece.

ZDRAVKO REIC

Czech Republic

Jozef pays usual price

CZECH joy at reaching Euro '96 was muted by drawing Russia, Germany and Italy in Group C, and having to play the Slovaks in the World Cup preliminaries.

On the club front, Jozef Jarabinšky left Sparta following the UEFA Cup defeat in Milan. It was hardly a sin to go out of Europe at San Siro, and 51-year-old Jarabinsky drily commented that he did not expect to be out of work long.

He is the third Sparta coach, after Juergen Sundermann and Karol Dobias, to come and go since Dusan Uhrin moved up to be in charge of the national team. Now Sparta hope Vlastimil Pertzela, who had to give up playing in 1984, can put the team on the road to the Champions League.

In the spring half-season he will have to beat off the challenge of Slavia and, surprisingly, Liberec. This may not be so easy given the five-point lead eternal rivals Slavia have opened up and the possible departures of internationals Kouba, Novotny and Frydek. They fancy following Siegl, who has joined Kaiserslautern, abroad.

Slavia not only finished Autumn top dog but face a UEFA cup quarter-final with Roma after putting out Lens.

At the other end, Zlin and fellow Moravians Uherske Hradiste have some serious thinking to do about how they avoid the drop.

Both ended on eight points and probably only one of the two has any chance of catching Cup-winners Cup representatives Hradec Kralove, who narrowly went out to Dynamo Moscow but seem to have neglected their League form.

BOB VAUGHAN

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Europe

Albania Teuta toppers

TEUTA DURRES led the table with 27 points after 16 games, one ahead of FK Tirana. The change to three points for an away win and two for a home win, with all draws worth one point, has had little effect on Teuta, who have maintained enviable consistency: in the past four seasons they finished third, second, first and second.

Four coaches have been departed in recent weeks. Shyqyri Reli, formerly in charge of the national squad, was sacked by Shkumbini because of poor results – only 11 points from 13 games – but the other three left voluntarily. They are Paulin Dede (Beselidhja), Gjergji Mone (Kastrioti) and Dhori Kalluci (Shqiponja).

Albania beat Bosnia 2-0 in the first official match played by the Bosnians since the peace agreement in the former Yugoslav state. Qendtro and newcomer Dosi scored the goals.

GEZIM NUSHI

Poland

Legia lead the way

"IF I had been told a year ago that we would reach a quarter-final of the Champions League, I would not have believed it. But it's true!" said Arthur Mazurek, a director of Legia Warsaw.

However, it would have been almost impossible without the help of Blackburn Rovers.

Legia lost their last Champions League group game 1-0 to Moscow Spartak, but they finished second in Group B thanks to Blackburn's 4-1 win over Rosenborg. No wonder Legia fans were singing Blackburn's praises at Wojska Polskiego stadium.

Legia's progress in this year's competition marks Polish football's finest moment since the silver medal won by the Olympic side at Barcelona in 1992.

So it was no surprise that Legia's manager Pawel Janas was voted Manager of the Year for the second year running by *Pilka Nozna* magazine. Legia have now won the League and Cup double twice under Janas.

One of Legia's squad, Leszek Pisz was Player of the Year. Ironically, the experienced midfielder, a free-kick specialist, has been out of the national team since 1993.

Towasz Iwan, the 24-year-old who plays for Feyenoord in Holland, was Discovery of the Year. He cost Feyenoord a Polish record £1.8m from Roda JC last year and made his national team debut against France last summer.

Andrzej Juskowiak, of Greece's Olympiakos, was voted Player of the Year in two other readers' polls organised by *Sport* and *Tempo*.

DARIUSZ KUROWSKI

Euro heroes . . . Legia take on Rosenborg in the Champions

Bulgaria

England first, then France

NO GROUP match with Germany in the European Championships finals. That was a relief for Bulgarian coach Dimitar Penev when the Euro '96 draw was made in Birmingham.

On the other hand neighbours Romania, one of the favourites, Spain, and France will make it a tight foursome, with the possibility of a meeting with the hosts or the Dutch to follow. All is speculation for the moment, and there is also the World Cup draw to contemplate.

Only Russia should provide substantial opposition in the five-strong Group 5, so a summer in France should follow the visit to England in June. Until then there is still the question of who will win the domestic title race.

Levski were 'Autumn champions' as a result of a 2-0 home win on the last Sunday of the first half-season, against Dobrudja, who stand seventh. Challengers Neftochimik also won, by the same score at relegation-threatened Lovetch, and remain only two points behind. The leaders also could have to shake off fellow Sofia clubs Slavia and Lok, third and fourth respectively and only five points adrift.

Fifth-placed Spartak Varna also will be looking for a UEFA Cup placing when football restarts in early March.

Spartak have top scorer Gyorgyiev on 14 in front of Petkov (Neftochimik) on 10 and revived Slavia's Chalamanov on nine.

The Cup semi-finals will be contested by CSKA, Neftochimik, Slavia and Lok Sofia.

Early moves in the close season have included Chalamanov's transfer to Altay and Levski's Dartilov to Kayserispor.

A coach had to be sacked, of course. This time it was former international Gyorgy Denev, dismissed by the second-from-bottom club Lovetch.

BOB VAUGHAN

Hungary

Just a slim chance . . .

THERE is no European Championship football or spring European Cup games for fans but perhaps there is a chance of reaching the World Cup finals in France in 1998.

Norway could be in decline, Switzerland not too strong, and the rest within the compass of a team who could develop with the influx from a successful Under-21 squad still in contention for their European Championship and an Olympic place.

On the other hand and despite some Ferencvaros heroics in the Champions League, club football remains painfully weak in general. 'Fradi' bowed out of the Champions League with expected defeat in Amsterdam, but a win and two draws was not bad and rather better than Rangers, Blackburn and Grasshopper.

Now Ferencvaros have to qualify again and keep the momentum going while sorting out the racist element which has attached itself to the club and behaved so disgracefully during Ajax's visit.

BOB VAUGHAN

Ukraine

Sabo takes charge

JOZEF SABO is the new chief coach of the Ukrainian national side and Olexander Ishchenko from Zirka Kirovohrad will train the Olympic side.

The two men replace Anatoly Konkov and Viktor Kolotov who left after their respective teams failed to qualify for the European and Olympic championships.

Konkov resigned after Ukraine finished out of the running for the Euro '96 finals in England. Kolotov, as Olympic coach, led the team to a disappointing second place in their qualifying group, although they had been the favourites.

A federation spokeman said: "We agreed on Kiev Dynamo's top coach because we've abandoned the idea of an exclusive coach. It makes sense because virtually the entire national side is made up of Dynamo players."

Romania

Steaua's welcome break

TWO-THIRDS of the domestic League games had been played by the mid-season break, in order to help the European Championship cause, but this does not help foreign-based players, the majority of the international side.

Nevertheless some of Anghel Iordanescu's squad will be able to have a brief breather before departure for England. A programme of warm-up matches still has to be drawn up but the Steaua players will have had enough football come May, even though they lost interest in the Champions League with a farcical final group home match with Juventus.

The 5,200 hardy souls who endured the perishing cold saw a slip-and-slide goalless draw, which should not even have been started. The draw meant an average of a point a game for Steaua, way off qualification for the quarter-finals. Now, led by 16-goal Vladoiu, they have to concentrate on retaining their lead at the top of the 'A' Division.

Nearest challengers Rapid are five points behind. Sponsorship of the capital's clubs seems to be beginning to pay off and the Railwaymen certainly seem to be benefiting from the cash injections. The UEFA Cup, however, is the only European competition for which they can qualify as, very unexpectedly, they went down 6-4 in the last 32 of the Cup to Second Division Foresta Falticeni.

'U' Craiova also were the victims of giant-killers, and Gloria Bistrita survived only by 1-0, at Gloria Cosmesti, a Fourth Division club.

Dinamo retained their interest, just, at Resita and the knock-out tournament looks the best chance of re-entering European competition in 1996-97.

Whether the top teams underestimate the lower sides or whether there is a depth to Romanian football is difficult to say, but there have been enough close calls for the elite to suggest the latter may well be the case.

At the bottom of the table there is all to play for and even the current bottom club, Selena Balau, could escape relegation in what is a very close season.

BOB VAUGHAN

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England

Comfort and Geordie joy

KEVIN KEEGAN will, no doubt, have told his Newcastle players to forget the festive indulgences over the holiday period and concentrate on the job at hand.

He need not have worried, though, as the Christmas and New Year programme brought United nothing but tidings of comfort and joy, a seven-point lead over Manchester United (with a game in hand), and unbackable odds of 1-7 on to take the title for the first time since 1927.

Three games over the holiday period – the away match at West Ham was postponed – brought two well-earned home victories for the Magpies, and an uncharacteristically lethargic 2-0 defeat at Old Trafford, which temporarily revitalised Manchester United's fading championship hopes.

Sadly for Alex Ferguson's injury-hit side, they followed the Newcastle victory with a 4-1 hammering at White Hart Lane on New Year's Day.

Newcastle, meanwhile, regrouped and outplayed an Arsenal side who have had a wretched run of just six points from their last six games. With winger Keith Gillespie on the long-term injury list, United were forced to reorganise, but displayed the true touch of champions by easily winning a match in which they certainly were not at their best.

Belgian defender Phillipe Albert returned to the heart of the defence, with Steve Howey switching to sweeper in a five-man defence designed to allow the full-backs – Warren Barton and Robbie Elliott – to push forward as auxiliary wingers. David Ginola, switched to the middle, and Les Ferdinand scored, to make it 11 wins out of 11 at St James' Park this season.

Keegan, however, will still be keen to impress upon his players that the title is far from in the bag. The fixture computer has thrown up a difficult run of fixtures during March and April, including trips to Nottingham Forest, Arsenal and Blackburn, as well as home ties with Manchester United and Aston Villa.

Realistically, the only challengers to Newcastle now are Man Utd, Liverpool and Tottenham. Alex Ferguson's defence has been ravaged by injuries to Schmeichel, Pallister, Bruce, Irwin and May and his gifted youngsters have found it difficult to bridge the gaps left by these experienced campaigners. At least, Andy Cole has re-found his scoring touch, though it may be too little too late.

Liverpool, on the other hand, are looking for their first Premier League triumph, and are showing starting to show genuine title ambitions. A dreadful run in November, the worst for 12 years, was turned round over Christmas and Robbie Folwer has been in outstanding form, scoring twice against Man Utd, yet another hat-trick against Arsenal and, most impressively, two more as Liverpool came from 2-0 down at home to Nottingham Forest to win 4-2. Fowler must soon force his way into Terry Venables's England plans, despite the claims of Ferdinand, Alan Shearer and Teddy Sheringham, whose Tottenham side have emerged as London's top side this season and unlikely title-chasers.

Sheringham's partnership with Chris Armstrong gets better with every game, and they displayed an almost telepathic understanding against Manchester United. Spurs have always been capable of scoring goals, but the key to their surge up the table has been Gerry Francis's work on getting his defence to play together as a unit, rather then the shambolic group of individuals who turned out under Ossie Ardiles.

Much of this has been achieved without injured Darren Anderton, and, once the England winger is fit again, the prospect of him and Ruel Fox on the wings supplying Sheringham and Armstrong in the middle is enough to have most defences quaking in their boots.

The fight for the three UEFA Cup places, reduced due to England's reluctant approach to the InterToto Cup last summer, should involve Aston Villa, Arsenal and Forest as well as the three sides chasing Newcastle. Villa and Forest have been losing as many as they win in recent weeks, and Arsenal's dreadful Christmas programme can partly be explained by injuries and suspensions, which ravaged their defence, and a sudden loss of form by David Platt, whose place in the England team could soon be under threat from Forest's Steve Stone and Newcastle's Robert Lee.

The real under-achievers this season have been Blackburn and Leeds United, currently level on points in the middle of the table. As if to underline the point (sic), both sides played out a hugely tedious 0-0 draw at fog-bound Elland Road on New Year's Day. Despite massive spending by both clubs, neither look capable of mounting a serious challenge and Blackburn's defence of their title looks like being the worst since 1992-93, when Leeds failed to win away from home all season (Rovers have failed to take three points on the road in 11 attempts this term).

At the foot of the table, Bolton have discovered that there's precious little room at the top, especially if a promotion-winning team is not strengthened immediately. Bolton have bought well in recent weeks, Scott Sellars from Newcastle and Sasa Curcic from Partizan Belgrade in particular, but the reinforcements have arrived too late to save manager Roy MacFarland's job.

The former England centre-half became the first Premiership managerial casualty this season after Bolton's 4-2 defeat at Sheffield Wednesday, for whom the Yugoslav striker Darko Kovacevic scored twice and looked outstanding. He should help the Owls climb away from the danger zone at the bottom of the table.

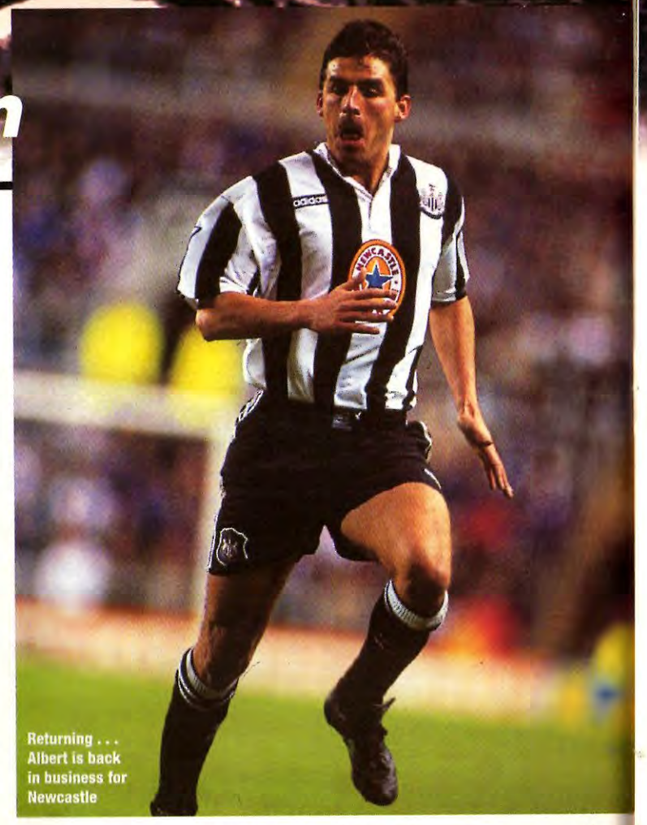
Coventry are heading the same way as Wednesday, thanks in no small part to Noel Whelan, a £2million signing from Leeds. Three goals in consecutive games have turned around Coventry's season. Man City, likewise, have started to put things right, and were the first club to enjoy the benefits of the 'Bosman Ruling' when they decided to field all their foreigners – Germans Eike Immel and Uwe Rosler, Georgian Georgi Kinkladze and Dane Ronnie Ekelund – in the game against Chelsea.

It is early days yet to start writing off teams' survival hopes, but QPR look particularly vulnerable at present. Ray Wilkins's struggling side have not enjoyed much luck this season and unhappy Ned Zelic has already returned to Germany.

● SIR Bert Millichip, 81, has confirmed he is to step down as FA chairman next summer, after 15 years in the job.

● DETAILS of the match-fixing allegations against John Fashanu, Hans Segers and Bruce Grobbelaar will be revealed in court on March 18.

JOHN KELLY



Returning . . . Albert is back in business for Newcastle

N Ireland

Hamilton stays in charge

NATIONAL coach Bryan Hamilton, as expected, has been awarded an extension to his contract until July 1998.

That will take him beyond the qualifying group matches for the World Cup Finals in France, though the odds are stacked against Northern Ireland in a very difficult group with Germany, Portugal, Ukraine, Albania and Armenia.

Up and coming young players such as Keith Gillespie (Newcastle), Steve Lomas (Manchester City) and Gerard McMahon (Tottenham) should relish playing against top-class opponents at international level, while Windsor Park should be full for the two big games.

On the domestic front, the gradual shift in power from Belfast to County Armagh, apparent in recent years, has become more apparent. Portadown and Glenavon have opened a gap at the top of the Premier League, with the 'big' Belfast clubs, Linfield and Glentoran struggling to keep up, and champions Crusaders faltering.

Glentoran signed striker Liam Coyle from Derry City for a record fee between Northern Irish clubs – around £38,000 – but were rocked when Coyle announced after only his second game that he no longer wanted to stay.

The Glentoran board had little alternative but to put their new signing on the transfer list, while the reason for his decision apparently remained a mystery.

ROY KITSON

Managerial maze leaves fans dazed

KEEPING track of transfers can be difficult enough, but it's nothing compared with the managerial maze currently afflicting English football.

Mark McGhee is now manager of Wolves, succeeding the sacked Graham Taylor. Before taking the England job, Taylor had been manager of Aston Villa. The Villa manager now is Brian Little, who left Leicester to take the job .

Leicester replaced Little with McGhee, who walked out what seemed like five minutes later, to go to Wolves. The replacement at Leicester is Martin O'Neill, once of Wycombe and then (briefly) of Norwich.

Mike Walker, sacked by Norwich and then by Everton, was offered a job by Luton but turned it down, hoping that Leicester would make him an offer. Luton promptly appointed Lennie Lawrence, who had been dismissed from Bradford City. His replacement there, Gary Megson, promptly took Walker's old job at Norwich, where he previously had been assistant to Walker and was given a £60,000 pay-off when he left.

Dave Bassett, fired by Sheffield United, was then – like ex-Everton manager Walker – touted as a possible for the Leicester job. Like Walker, Bassett did not get it, but his old post at Sheffield was taken by Howard Kendall, who had preceded Walker at Everton and had then gone to Manchester City, where Alan Ball pitched up after managing Southampton before Dave Merrington was appointed.

Before going to Shefield United, Bassett had been manager of Wimbledon and before that he had been manager at Watford, where he succeeded Graham Taylor, now sacked by Wolves and replaced by Mark McGhee, who quit Reading to go to Leicester. Which is where we came in. I think.

Should we laugh or should we cry?

DAVID PROLE

Scotland

The Scots are coming!

REINFORCE the goalposts – the Scots are back at Wembley! After several years of indifference and apathy towards the national team, the Tartan Army have now regrouped and are preparing to head south for Euro '96.

The Braveheart spirit has been rekindled by the quirk of fate which placed Scotland in the same group as England, thereby reviving the oldest international fixture in world football, with the two sides scheduled to meet at Wembley on June 15.

The fixture was first played in 1872, but there was an untimely end to the series in 1989, with threat of crowd trouble rendering the annual game more trouble than it was worth.

In the domestic game, there was a third successive appearance in a national cup final by a First Division team. Dundee reached the Coca-Cola Cup Final but failed to emulate Raith Rovers, who won the trophy last season and were unable to compare even with Airdrie, who gave Celtic a fright in last year's Scottish Cup Final.

Dundee merely capitulated to an ascendant Aberdeen side who, with goals from Billy Dodds and Duncan Shearer, strolled to their first major trophy for five years, and helped erase the unhappy memories of last season, when relegation was avoided by the narrowest possible margin.

Celtic continue to mount a challenge to Rangers in the championship, and the acquisition of Danish international midfielder Morten Wieghorst from Dundee has provided additional strength in a rapidly-improving player pool.

The early promise shown by Hibernian, however, has disintegrated in spectacular fashion, and the Premier Division has now developed into a two-horse race, with Glasgow's Old Firm pulling away.

Rangers strengthened their position with a 0-0 draw at Parkhead in the first fixture of 1996. However, Paul Gascoigne collected a booking in the derby which, along with the disciplinary point received in a farcical booking against Hibs, left him facing a two-match ban.

Dunfermline, Greenock Morton, Dundee United and Dundee are involved in the fight for the solitary promotion place from the First Division.

ALAN FAIRLEY

Double booked . . . Gascoigne returns the ref's missing yellow card, in customary fashion, only to be cautioned for his efforts

next month

WE KICK OFF OUR PREVIEW OF THE 1996 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP FINALS WITH A 16-PAGE SPECIAL ON GROUP A

ENGLAND
HOLLAND
SCOTLAND
SWITZERLAND

UEFA euro96 England

ALSO . . .

Glory hunters! Who's heading for promotion from Europe's second divisions

Spotlight on Tulio, star of the Brazilian national championship

The full story from the 1996 African Nations Cup in South Africa

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MARCH ISSUE ON SALE FEBRUARY 9

THE DRAW

UEFA euro96 England

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GROUP A

June 8	England v Switzerland	Wembley	3.00
June 10	Holland v Scotland	Villa Park	4.30
June 13	Switzerland v Holland	Villa Park	7.30
June 15	Scotland v England	Wembley	3.00
June 18	Scotland v Switzerland	Villa Park	7.30
June 18	Holland v England	Wembley	7.30

GROUP B

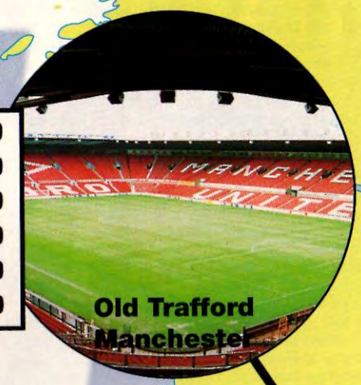
June 9	Spain v Bulgaria	Elland Road	2.30
June 10	Romania v France	St James' Park	7.30
June 13	Bulgaria v Romania	St James' Park	4.30
June 15	France v Spain	Elland Road	6.00
June 18	France v Bulgaria	St James' Park	4.30
June 18	Romania v Spain	Elland Road	4.30

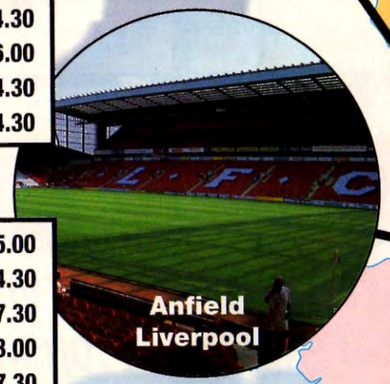
GROUP C

June 9	Germany v Czech Rep	Old Trafford	5.00
June 11	Italy v Russia	Anfield	4.30
June 14	Czech Republic v Italy	Anfield	7.30
June 16	Russia v Germany	Old Trafford	3.00
June 19	Russia v Czech Republic	Anfield	7.30
June 19	Italy v Germany	Old Trafford	7.30

GROUP D

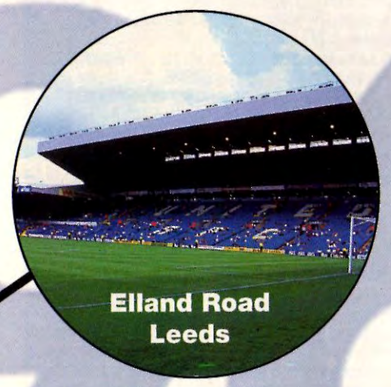
June 9	Denmark v Portugal	Hillsborough	7.30
June 11	Turkey v Croatia	City Ground	7.30
June 14	Portugal v Turkey	City Ground	4.30
June 16	Croatia v Denmark	Hillsborough	6.00
June 19	Croatia v Portugal	City Ground	4.30
June 19	Turkey v Denmark	Hillsborough	4.30


Old Trafford
Manchester

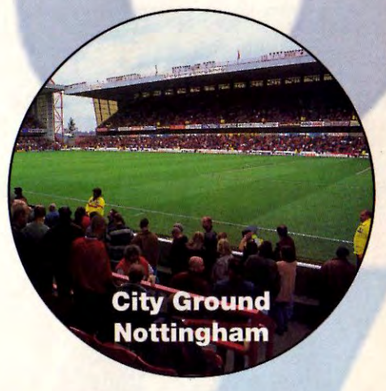

Anfield
Liverpool

Villa Park
Birmingham

St James' Park
Newcastle


Elland Road
Leeds

Hillsborough
Sheffield


City Ground
Nottingham

Wembley Stadium
London

QUARTER-FINALS			
June 22..1	Winner B v Runner-up A	Anfield	6.30
June 22..2	Runner-up B v Winner A	Wembley	3.00
June 23..3	Winner C v Runner-up D	Old Trafford	3.00
June 23..4	Runner-up C v Winner D	Villa Park	6.30
SEMI-FINALS			
June 26	QF1 v QF4	Old Trafford	4.00
June 26	QF2 v QF3	Wembley	7.30
FINAL			
June 30	Wembley		7.00

South America

Argentina

Title lost in 12 minutes

TWELVE fateful minutes cost Boca Juniors the national opening championship in Argentina after they had had a six-point lead with six games to go.

Visitors Racing Club scored after four, 10 and 12 minutes against a defence who had conceded only six goals in their first 16 unbeaten games, and goalkeeper Navarro Montoya, who had been unbeaten for 668 minutes.

Racing Club went on to win 6-4, which not only let Velez Sarsfield take over a lead which they never lost, but also effectively ended Boca's hopes. The rift in the team – between two groups lead by Navarro Montoya and Marcico – became evident again.

The split seemed to have been healed when Diego Maradona returned to play, but he had not turned up for training all week and it showed again in the second half, even though he helped Boca score more goals than they had done in any other game all season.

With four games to go, Miguel Angel Brindisi took over as coach of Racing Club (from Pedro Marchetta) as they were lying in third place six points from the top. He prescribed the only formula to have a title chance – all-out attack.

After Racing's 4-1 win over Newell's Old Boys, Boca's tight defence suddenly found themselves facing attack on all fronts.

Boca Juniors lost their title chance at La Plata the following week, losing 2-1 to Estudiantes after Maradona had again failed to turn up for training all week.

Eventually car maker Mauricio Macri was voted in as new Boca president and planned to sign Carlos Bilardo, the former World Cup coach. As a result, Maradona, who did not get on well with Bilardo at Sevilla and wanted to become Boca's coach, decided he would leave the club, but later changed his mind.

Estudiantes, in the relegation zone until they dismissed coaches Miguel Russo and Eduardo Manera, finished with eight unbeaten games and out of relegation danger under PT coach Daniel Cordoba, who stepped up without any previous coaching experience (mainly because the club had no money to sign anyone else).

The club's Jose Luis Calderon was League top scorer with 13 goals, ahead of Ruben Capria (Racing) and Claudio Biaggio (San Lorenzo) with 10.

Velez Sarsfield were up among the leaders all season, although losing a vital match to Boca Juniors 1-0. When Boca failed, they went to the top. In spite of the lengthy absence through injury of one of their best forwards, Omar Asad, they were notable for playing with three up front as well as having the best defence (13 goals).

Paraguayan goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert and international Roberto Trotta stood out.

On the last day only Racing Club had a chance to catch Velez, who were playing Independiente while Racing seemed to have an easier game away to Santa Fe's Colon.

All week rumours were rife that Independiente would let Velez Sarsfield at least draw to stop their Avellaneda neighbours and bitter rivals from having a title chance – a tie on points would have meant a play-off – and that Independiente players had received cash offers from outside their club to win.

At half-time it was still touch and go, with both Velez and Racing leading 1-0. But Velez won 3-0 while Racing, again throwing everything into attack, left themselves open at the back and lost 5-1.

Lanus, never considered as title contenders but staying among the leaders with steady performances, finished joint second – six points behind – with Racing Club and Boca Juniors. San Lorenzo, one of the favourites, were too erratic and finished fifth.

This was only Velez Sarsfield's third title. River Plate continue as leading title winners with 24 after a very disappointing season under inexperienced and highly-paid coach Ramon Diaz.

● Rough play on the field and crowd trouble all season ended on the last day with bitter fighting between fans of Estudiantes and Gimnasia y Esgrima in the La Plata derby, which left 150 injured, some seriously, with bullet and knife wounds.

ERIC WEIL

Viva Velez . . . Jose Luis Chilavert *(left)* and Roberto Trotta celebrate their title succcess

SUPERCUP

'Inde' lead them all

WHEN Independiente of Argentina retained the South American Supercup – the competition for past Libertadores Cup winners – at the end of last year they became, according to a local calculation, the leading official international trophy winners in the world with 15, one ahead of Milan.

Independiente have won the Libertadores Cup seven times (1964-65-72-73-74-75-84), the Inter-American Cup (between winners in North and Central and South America) three times (1973-4-6), the Intercontinental Cup twice (1973-84), the Supercup twice (1994-95) and the Recopa (for Cup winners) in 1995.

The success is diluted, however, because South American teams can participate in several continental cups in one year, while European teams have only one.

Independiente threw their all into the Supercup, but they did not have much to beat. The tournament, for all previous Libertadores Cup winners, starting in 1960, always includes teams not now in top form. One, River Plate, owed a lot to Enzo Francescoli and young goalkeeper Irigoytia (a Junior World Cup champion) who got them through one round by saving two penalties in the shoot-out.

Against Independiente in the semi-final he was replaced by Burgos (looking for more experience) and River Plate lost on penalties.

Flamengo, also poor all season, reached the Final, their last chance to win something in their centenary year, but Independiente beat them 2-0 at home and lost 1-0 in Rio de Janeiro in front of a crowd estimated at over 100,000 – rarely seen at Maracana these days.

Independiente fans cheered their coach, Miguel Angel Lopez, who had been criticised all season but he left at the end of the year anyway, saying he could not get used to his native Argentina after coaching abroad (mostly Mexico) for several years.

The Supercup has now been won four times by Argentinian clubs (Racing Club 1988, Boca Juniors 1989, Independiente 1994 and 1995), three times by Brazilians (Cruzeiro 1991 ans 1992, Sao Paulo 1993) and once by Paraguay's Olimpia (1990).

THE CONMEBOL CUP continues to be a loss maker. Brazil's Atletico Mineiro were on the point of winning it at press time, having won the home leg of the final 4-0 against Argentina's Rosario Central.

The latter's players had arranged with the club to take the profits, but now find themselves owing $4,000 for expenses.

The CONMEBOL Cup will not be played this year or next while World Cup qualifying is taking place. Who knows if it will then be continued?

ERIC WEIL

Brazil

Botafogo best at last

Top scorer . . . Botafogo's Tulio

BOTAFOGO beat Santos to win their first Brazilian national title, in a final that evoked memories of the great players of the 60s.

But the celebrations were interrupted with the subsequent news that coach Paulo Autuori was leaving for Portugal, to take over at Benfica.

Botafogo had easily won one group of the championship's second round, in which teams played those of the other group, while Santos won the second section, where the lead changed hands continuously. They joined first-round group winners Fluminense and Cruzeiro in the semi-finals.

Botafogo drew twice with Cruzeiro and went through to the final on their better overall record in the competition, in spite of the 1-1 aggregate score.

Santos seemed to be out of it after losing 4-1 at Fluminese, then they put up a great performance at home to win 5-2 and go on to the final, thanks to their overall record.

They had the advantage in the final, because their better overall figures would have given them the title in the case of an aggregate draw. But they lost the first game 2-1 in Rio and could only draw 1-1 at home, although dominating the game. Tulio's goal for Botafogo was hotly contested for offside.

The stars were the rival strikers, two of Brazil's best players – Tulio and Giovanni, and fittingly they finished as the championship's leading scorers, Tulio with 23 goals and Giovanni with 17.

Neither team had won the title since the championship became truly national in 1971, and this season heralded their return to prominence. Pele is now a director of Santos and his son, Edinho, is the team's goalkeeper. He put up some notable performances.

Flamengo ended their 100th anniversary year empty-handed in spite of laying out some $12m on a 'dream attack' of Romario, Edmundo and Savio. They never functioned well, mainly because they do not get on.

Romario often misses training and does not travel with the team. Now he has admitted that he will have to train more conscientiously and look after himself, to avoid last season's frequent injuries. The question is, will he do it?

Fan shot dead

ONE Santos supporter was shot dead and three others were wounded when they were attacked by a gang after the first match with Botafogo.

The fans, travelling in two cars, got lost and mistakenly drove into one of the shanty towns on the edge of Guanabara Bay. Alleged drugs traders mistook them for members of a rival gang and opened fire.

There were remarkable scenes at the airport when the victorious Botafogo squad returned to Rio. Dozens of fans burst out of the terminal on to the tarmac and climbed on to the plane's wings.

A fire engine was used to take the team to the club HQ, with new idol Tulio doing nothing to calm the excitement when he waved a dead fish throughout the journey. Santos are sometimes known as 'The Fish' because Sao Paolo is a major port.

In Brief

1997 COPA AMERICA

THE NEXT South American Championship, for the Copa America, scheduled for Bolivia in 1997, is under a cloud due to World Cup qualifying matches being played at the time. Several countries were in favour of postponing it, but television contracts have already been signed with the Brazilian firm, *Traffic*.

Countries are now likely to send their 'B' teams to the event – except perhaps automatic World Cup qualifiers Brazil – and TV will lose out all the same. After 1997 the competition will be played at four-year intervals to avoid the clash with World Cup games.

CHILE

UNIVERSIDAD DE CHILE, who won the title for the first time in 25 years in 1994, retained it two points ahead of their traditional rivals, Universidad Catolica.

Catolica then went on to win the four-team play-off for the vice-championship and the second place in the next Libertadores Cup.

For the champions, the signing of former international midfielder Leonardo Rodriguez helped a lot, while Catolica's two Argentinian internationals, midfielder Nestor Gorosito and striker Alberto Acosta, did not match to last season's outstanding form.

Colo Colo also were in the title fight, leading at one time, but they were somewhat erratic and finished third. Bonus points may be vital.

COLOMBIA

DEPORTIVO CALI won the season's opening championship in which the 16 First Division teams were divided into two groups, although playing each other, and ending with teams in the same positions in each group facing each other over two legs.

Group 'A' winners Deportivo Cali beat Nacional to earn 1.5 bonus points to take into the season-ending final round, while runners-up America beat Tolima. Nacional take one bonus point, America 0.75 and Tolima 0.50.

In the closing championship, to start after a one-month break, the top four will obtain similar bonus points for the final round. For this the top four on overall points will qualify.

Nacional frequently played reserve teams in League games while engaged in the Libertadores and Super cups, yet won Group 'B'. In the finals, after drawing 1-1 with Deportivo Cali in the first game, they lost the second 2-1, and finished with nine men, Matamba and Angel being sent off.

URUGUAY

LEADING clubs Penarol and Nacional again found it hard to qualify for this year's Libertadores Cup in the end-of-season Liguilla tournament.

Penarol were First Division champions for the second year running after a play-off with Nacional, who had won one of the two rounds, but both clubs did not do so well in the cup qualifying tournament, which brings together the six clubs with most points during both First Division rounds, plus the two best provincial clubs. The top two qualify for the Libertadores.

When it was all over, two small clubs – Liverpool and Defensor Sporting – shared top place and the latter won a play-off 1-0. Nacional were out of it but Penarol got into another play-off – the system is too complicated to be easily understood – and beat Liverpool 2-1. Veteran international midfielder Bengoechea scored the winner with one of his lethal free-kicks, five minutes from the end.

Nacional midfielder Fabian O'Neill – of Scottish ancestry – was named Player of the Year by Uruguayan soccer writers. He was sold to Italy's Cagliari for $1.3million before the season ended.

● **PARAGUAY:** Olimpia recaptured the title they had lost to Cerro Porteno in 1994 by beating the latter 8-7 on penalties. They are champions for the 34th time.

● **ECUADOR:** Barcelona of Guayaquil won the First Division for the 12th time, beating Espoli 2-0 and 1-0 in the two-leg play-off.

● **BOLIVIA:** San Jose and Guabira shared top place the six-team final round and are to play off for the title.

Bolivia are protesting strongly at the South American Confederation's decision – backed by FIFA – to ban La Paz (11,900 ft above sea level) as a venue for World Cup qualifying games. Parliament passed a motion condemning the ban, and Bolivians staged a strike in protest.

● **PERU:** Sporting Cristal confirmed their ascendancy in Peru by coasting to a second consecutive title. This was also a second for manager Juan Carlos Oblitas, who now leaves Cristal to coach the national side.

Cristal were worthy winners, led by Roberto Palacios, Player of the Year, and Brazilian Julinho, the League's leading scorer with 23 goals.

Two principal rivals, Alianza and Universitario, were severely weakened by financial and management problems. *Peter Hudson*

MEN IN THE NEWS

EDMUNDO, the Brazilian forward constantly in the wars on the field and off it, was involved in a car crash in Rio in which three people were killed and six were injured. Edmundo, who was leaving a night club in the early hours, could face four years in prison if found guilty of homicide.

DIEGO MARADONA was awarded an honorary title by Buenos Aires University, which did not want to be overshadowed by Oxford's award of a degree earlier last year. The students had not been consulted and many booed him at the ceremony.

CARLOS VALDERRAMA, the 34-year-old Colombian international midfielder, has signed for the new US Major Soccer League. He will be assigned to one of the New York-New Jersey, Dallas or Tampa franchises.

ERIC WEIL

Champions Challenge

Hotlines: 0891 776008 (UK) or int exit code + 44 990 443208 (overseas).

Phone these numbers to find out your team's latest score and to make transfers. Calls cost 39p per minute cheap rate and 49p per minute all other times. For the 990 number, the cost is the same as an international call to the UK.

PLAYER POINTS TOTALS AFTER SIX ROUNDS OF THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

TRANSFERS Managers can find out their team's latest score and make transfers by ringing our Champions Challenge hotline. Up to eight transfers can be made between now and the quarter-finals. However, only two transfers are allowed per phone call. The transfer values of the players bought in each phone call must equal the value of those sold and the formation of the team must not change. Managers who picked Kiev Dynamo players in their original teams will be able to make additional transfers for every Kiev player in their original team.

Code	Player	Club	points	fee
200	Edwin Van Der Sar	AJAX	9	2.8
202	Fred Grim	AJAX	0	0.6
203	Tim Flowers	BLAC	-4	3.0
204	Bobby Mimms	BLAC	0	0.4
205	Matt Dickins	BLAC	0	0.3
206	Stefan Klos	BORU	-4	2.1
207	Wolfgang De Beer	BORU	0	0.7
208	Attila Hajdu	FERC	-14	2.1
209	Jozsef Szeller	FERC	0	0.4
220	Roberto Bockli	GRAS	0	0.5
222	Pascal Zuberbuhler	GRAS	-8	1.0
223	Angelo Peruzzi	JUVE	0	3.0
224	Michaelangelo Rampulla	JUVE	2	0.5
225	Alexander Shovkovski	KIEV	0	0.8
226	Andrei Kovtun	KIEV	0	0.7
227	Grzegorz Szamotulski	LEGI	0	0.7
228	Tomasz Borkowski	LEGI	0	0.6
229	Dominique Casagrande	NANT	1	2.0
230	David Marraud	NANT	-1	0.5
232	Jozef Wandzik	PANA	5	2.0
233	Antonios Nikopolidis	PANA	0	0.4
234	Vitor Baia	PORT	1	3.2
235	Vitor Novoa	PORT	0	0.6
236	Silvino	PORT	0	1.7
237	Andy Goram	RANG	-14	2.7
238	Billy Thomson	RANG	-4	0.4
239	Francisco Buyo	REAL	-1	3.2
240	Jose Canizares	REAL	0	2.0
242	Ola By Rise	ROSE	-7	1.1
243	Jorn Jamtfall	ROSE	-7	0.3
244	Stanislav Cherchesov	SPAR	2	2.0
245	Dmitri Tyapushkin	SPAR	0	1.5
246	Bogdan Stelea	STEA	1	1.8
247	Dumitru Stingaciu	STEA	0	1.2
300	Danny Blind	AJAX	5	2.5
302	Frank F De Boer	AJAX	13	3.0
303	Michael Reiziger	AJAX	9	2.7
304	Sonny Silooy	AJAX	0	2.0
305	Winston Bogarde	AJAX	9	0.8
306	Marcio Santos	AJAX	0	3.0
307	Jeff Kenna	BLAC	-3	1.2
308	Henning Berg	BLAC	-4	2.2
309	Colin Hendry	BLAC	-6	2.7
320	Graeme Le Saux	BLAC	-3	2.5
322	Ian Pearce	BLAC	-2	0.8
323	Paul Warhurst	BLAC	-3	0.9
324	Nicky Marker	BLAC	2	0.5
325	Julio Cesar	BORU	-1	2.2
326	Martin Kree	BORU	3	0.8
327	Marco Kurz	BORU	0	0.8
328	Gunter Kutowski	BORU	0	1.2
329	Jurgen Kohler	BORU	-2	3.2
330	Matthias Sammer	BORU	-2	3.5
332	Bodo Schmidt	BORU	-3	1.1
333	Janos Hrutka	FERC	-11	0.5
334	Jozsef Keller	FERC	-16	1.0
335	Tibor Simon	FERC	-3	1.2
336	Andras Telek	FERC	-10	1.2
337	Szergej Kuznyecov	FERC	-10	0.7
338	Akos Koller	FERC	0	0.8
339	Harald Gamperle	GRAS	-8	1.2
340	Mats Gren	GRAS	-9	1.8
342	Pascal Thuler	GRAS	-5	0.9
343	Ramon Vega	GRAS	-11	1.1
344	Alain Geiger	GRAS	-11	2.2
345	Massimo Carrera	JUVE	1	1.0
346	Ciro Ferrara	JUVE	4	1.8
347	Pierto Vierchowod	JUVE	-1	2.5
348	Luca Fusi	JUVE	-2	2.0
349	Sergio Porrini	JUVE	0	1.1
350	Moreno Torricelli	JUVE	10	2.0
352	Gianluca Pessotto	JUVE	3	1.0
353	Alessio Tacchinardi	JUVE	1	0.8
354	Alessandro Orlando	JUVE	0	1.5
355	Juan Pablo Sorin	JUVE	-2	1.5
356	Oleg Luzhny	KIEV	0	1.2
357	Sergei Shmatovalenko	KIEV	0	1.4
358	Sergei Bezhenar	KIEV	0	0.8
359	Vladislav Vashchuk	KIEV	0	1.5
360	Andrei Khomin	KIEV	0	1.5
362	Alexander Golovko	KIEV	0	1.6
363	Yuri Dmitrulin	KIEV	0	1.0
364	Sergei Balanchuk	KIEV	0	1.1
365	Zbigniew Mandziejewicz	LEGI	-4	0.7
366	Piotr Mosor	LEGI	2	0.7
367	Marek Jozwiak	LEGI	2	1.2
368	Jacek Zielinski	LEGI	-6	0.5
369	Krzysztof Ratajczyk	LEGI	-3	0.8
370	Eddy Capron	NANT	0	0.8
372	Jean-Marc Chanelet	NANT	1	0.8
373	Eric Decroix	NANT	0	1.0
374	Laurent Guyot	NANT	6	0.8
375	Serge Le Dizet	NANT	-1	0.7
376	Efstratios Apostolakis	PANA	6	2.5
377	Georgios S Georgiadis	PANA	11	0.6
378	Ioannis Kalitzakis	PANA	1	1.5
379	Georgios Kapouranis	PANA	5	1.4
380	Athanasios Kolitsidakis	PANA	3	1.7
382	Leonidas Christodoulou	PANA	2	0.9
383	Joao D Pinto	PORT	1	2.0
384	Aloisio	PORT	1	1.8
385	Jorge Costa	PORT	2	2.2
386	Ze Carlos	PORT	5	2.1
387	Rui Jorge	PORT	0	2.0
388	Fernando Bandeirinha	PORT	0	1.5
389	Paulinho Santos	PORT	1	1.7
390	Paulo Lino	PORT	0	1.6
392	Joao M Pinto	PORT	-2	2.7
393	Stephen Wright	RANG	-11	1.0
394	David Robertson	RANG	-7	1.2
395	Gordan Petric	RANG	-12	1.5
396	Richard Gough	RANG	-2	2.5
397	Gary Bollan	RANG	-7	0.6
398	Brian Reid	RANG	0	0.6
399	Alan McLaren	RANG	-4	2.4
400	Miguel Soler	REAL	0	3.0
402	Chendo	REAL	-3	1.8
403	Nando	REAL	-1	2.0
404	Manuel Sanchis	REAL	-1	2.5
405	Mikel Lasa	REAL	3	1.9
406	Rafael Alkorta	REAL	-1	2.7
407	Quique Flores	REAL	0	2.7
408	Jose Garcia Calvo	REAL	0	0.7
409	Bjorn Otto Bragstad	ROSE	-16	0.4
420	Jon Olav Hjelde	ROSE	0	0.4
422	Erik Hoftun	ROSE	-14	0.3
423	Bjorn Tore Kvarme	ROSE	-10	0.4
424	Arne Winsnes	ROSE	0	0.5
425	Espen Solheim	ROSE	0	0.8
426	Stale Stensaas	ROSE	-8	0.4
427	Jan Halvor Halvorsen	ROSE	0	0.9
428	Andrei Afanasiev	SPAR	0	1.0
429	Viktor Onopko	SPAR	2	2.7
430	Ilia Tsimbalar	SPAR	8	2.2
432	Dmitri Khlestov	SPAR	2	2.0
433	Yuri Nikiforov	SPAR	20	2.0
434	Dmitri Ananko	SPAR	1	0.7
435	Alexander Lipko	SPAR	0	0.6
436	Ramiz Mamedov	SPAR	15	0.6
437	Egor Titov	SPAR	-1	0.4
438	Andrei Ivanov	SPAR	0	1.6
439	Daniel Prodan	STEA	7	2.5
440	Tiberiu Csik	STEA	1	0.9
442	Anton Dobos	STEA	1	1.0
443	Aurel Panait	STEA	0	1.0
444	Bogdan Bucur	STEA	3	0.7
445	Ionel Pirvu	STEA	1	0.4
500	Edgar Davids	AJAX	0	2.7
502	Jari Litmanen	AJAX	24	4.5
503	Martijn Reuser	AJAX	0	0.7
504	Arnold Scholten	AJAX	0	0.9
505	Kizito 'Kiki' Musampa	AJAX	0	1.0
506	Ronald R De Boer	AJAX	4	3.0
507	Mark Atkins	BLAC	0	0.6
508	David Batty	BLAC	0	2.8
509	Matthew Holmes	BLAC	0	1.0
520	Tim Sherwood	BLAC	0	2.5
522	Jason Wilcox	BLAC	0	1.7
523	Patrik Berger	BORU	0	1.9
524	Thomas Franck	BORU	0	0.7
525	Steffen Freund	BORU	0	0.8
526	Andreas Moller	BORU	8	3.7
527	Knut Reinhardt	BORU	0	2.8
528	Stefan Reuter	BORU	0	2.7
529	Michael Zorc	BORU	4	3.2
530	Florian Albert	FERC	8	2.5
532	Zoltan Kecskes	FERC	0	2.2
533	Krisztian Lisztes	FERC	8	2.0
534	Zoran Kuntics	FERC	0	1.5
535	Zsolt Paling	FERC	0	1.7
536	Otto Vincze	FERC	8	0.8
537	Dejan Milovanovics	FERC	0	1.8
538	Gabor Vincze	FERC	0	0.6
539	Marcel Koller	GRAS	0	1.0
540	Massimo Lombardo	GRAS	0	0.8
542	Tomasz Rzasa	GRAS	0	1.4
543	Gurkan Sermeter	GRAS	0	0.6
544	Johann Vogel	GRAS	0	1.1
545	Murat Yakin	GRAS	0	1.1
546	Antonio Conte	JUVE	8	2.4
547	Vladimir Jugovic	JUVE	4	3.2
548	Didier Deschamps	JUVE	0	3.5
549	Angelo Di Livio	JUVE	4	2.0
550	Attilio Lombardo	JUVE	0	3.5
552	Giancarlo Marocchi	JUVE	4	2.8
553	Paulo Sousa	JUVE	0	3.6
554	Yuri Kalitvintsev	KIEV	0	1.8
555	Pavel Shkapenko	KIEV	0	1.5
556	Dmitri Mikhailenko	KIEV	0	1.7
557	Sergei Mizin	KIEV	0	0.8
558	Andrei Shevchenko	KIEV	0	1.7
559	Vitali Kosovski	KIEV	0	0.6
560	Yuri Maksimov	KIEV	0	1.5
562	Yevgeni Pokhlebaev	KIEV	0	1.3
563	Leszek Pisz	LEGI	8	1.0
564	Adam Fedoruk	LEGI	0	1.2
565	Jacek Kacprzak	LEGI	0	0.8
566	Gregorz Lewandowski	LEGI	0	1.2
567	Radoslaw Michalski	LEGI	0	1.1
568	Jacek Bednarz	LEGI	0	1.0
569	Marcin Jalocha	LEGI	0	1.7
570	Tomasz Wieszczycki	LEGI	0	1.2
572	Ryszard Staniek	LEGI	4	1.6
573	Bemoit Cauet	NANT	0	0.9
574	Jean-Michel Ferri	NANT	0	1.4
575	Claude Makelele	NANT	0	2.0
576	Bruno Carotti	NANT	0	1.0
577	Jocelyn Gourvennec	NANT	0	1.2
578	David Garcion	NANT	0	1.2
579	Georgios Alexopoulos	PANA	0	1.1
580	Alexandros Alexoudis	PANA	4	2.8
582	Georgios H Georgiadis	PANA	4	0.7
583	Andreas Lagonikakis	PANA	0	0.6
584	Spiridon Maragos	PANA	0	2.8
585	Nikolaos Nioplias	PANA	0	2.9
586	Juan Jose Borelli	PANA	0	2.7
587	Dimitrios Markos	PANA	4	2.7
588	Marinos Ouzounidis	PANA	0	1.8
589	Jose Semedo	PORT	0	2.6
590	Jorge Couto	PORT	0	2.4
592	Carlos Secretario	PORT	0	1.7
593	Russel Latapy	PORT	0	1.9
594	Emerson	PORT	8	2.1
595	Peter Lipcsei	PORT	0	2.0
596	Al Bino	PORT	0	0.8
597	Rui Barros	PORT	8	4.5
598	Ian Durrant	RANG	0	2.5
599	Stuart McCall	RANG	0	2.5
600	Neil Murray	RANG	0	0.8
602	Trevor Steven	RANG	0	2.7
603	Ian Ferguson	RANG	4	2.6
604	Alexei Mikhailichenko	RANG	0	1.3
605	Paul Gascoigne	RANG	4	8.0
606	Fernando Hierro	REAL	4	3.0
607	Michel	REAL	4	2.8
608	Luis Milla	REAL	0	2.0
609	Fernando Redondo	REAL	0	4.2
620	Michael Laudrup	REAL	0	6.5
622	Luis Enrique	REAL	0	3.5
623	Luis Martinez	REAL	0	1.7
624	Sandro	REAL	0	0.8
625	Fredy Rincon	REAL	0	3.5
626	Roar Strand	ROSE	4	1.0
627	Tom Kare Staurvik	ROSE	0	0.6
628	Karl-Petter Loken	ROSE	12	1.0
629	Bent Skammelsrud	ROSE	0	0.7
630	Jahn Ivar Jakobsen	ROSE	8	2.0
632	Andrei Konovalov	SPAR	0	1.0
633	Dmitri Alenichev	SPAR	8	1.0
634	Vasili Kulkov	SPAR	0	3.0
635	Valeri Kechinov	SPAR	8	0.7
636	Andrei Piatnitski	SPAR	0	3.0
637	Constantin Gilca	STEA	0	2.0
638	Roland Nagy	STEA	0	0.8
639	Damian Militaru	STEA	0	2.1
640	Iulian Filipescu	STEA	0	0.6
642	Laurentiu Rosu	STEA	0	0.7
700	Nwankwo Kanu	AJAX	0	5.0
702	Finidi George	AJAX	2	4.2
703	Patrick Kluivert	AJAX	8	7.0
704	Marc Overmars	AJAX	4	6.2
705	Nordin Wooter	AJAX	0	0.5
706	Dennis Schulp	AJAX	0	0.5
707	Kevin Gallacher	BLAC	0	1.8
708	Stuart Ripley	BLAC	0	2.0
709	Alan Shearer	BLAC	2	8.0
720	Chris Sutton	BLAC	0	4.7
722	Mike Newell	BLAC	8	2.0
723	Stephane Chapuisat	BORU	0	4.5
724	Karlheinz Riedle	BORU	2	6.2
725	Ruben Sosa	BORU	0	5.5
726	Heiko Herrlich	BORU	2	6.8
727	Goran Kopunovics	FERC	2	0.7
728	Zsolt Nagy	FERC	0	1.5
729	Gabor Zavadszky	FERC	0	0.7
730	Patrick De Napoli	GRAS	0	1.0
732	Joel Magnin	GRAS	0	0.8
733	Nestor Subiat	GRAS	2	2.5
734	Alexandre Comisetti	GRAS	2	0.6
735	Ibrahim Ali	GRAS	2	1.9
736	Udi Duke	GRAS	0	1.0
737	Eric Viscaal	GRAS	0	1.8
738	Alessandro Del Piero	JUVE	10	6.0
739	Fabrizio Ravanelli	JUVE	8	7.5
740	Gianluca Vialli	JUVE	0	%10.0
742	Michele Padovano	JUVE	2	2.0
743	Viktor Leonenko	KIEV	0	4.0
744	Sergei Skachenko	KIEV	0	2.2
745	Sergei Rebrov	KIEV	0	2.0
746	Sergei Konovalov	KIEV	0	1.7
747	Jerzy Podbrozny	LEGI	2	2.0
748	Tomasz Unton	LEGI	0	0.9
749	Cezary Kucharski	LEGI	0	1.5
750	Andrzej Kubica	LEGI	0	2.2
752	Annor Aziz	LEGI	0	1.3
753	Japhet N'Doram	NANT	2	2.7
754	Nicolas Ouedec	NANT	4	3.0
755	Reynald Pedros	NANT	6	2.7
756	Laurent Peyrelade	NANT	0	1.1
757	Roman Kosecki	NANT	2	2.9
758	Anthony Martins	NANT	0	0.9
759	Franck Renou	NANT	0	0.7
760	Georgios Donis	PANA	0	1.5
762	Krzystof Warzycha	PANA	6	3.2
763	Domingos	PORT	0	3.7
764	Ljubinko Drulovic	PORT	2	1.6
765	Antonio Folha	PORT	0	2.0
766	Edmilson	PORT	0	2.5
767	Grzegorz Mielcarski	PORT	0	2.2
768	Ally McCoist	RANG	0	4.0
769	Charlie Miller	RANG	0	1.0
770	Oleg Salenko	RANG	0	2.2
772	Mark Hateley	RANG	0	5.0
773	Gordon Durie	RANG	2	2.5
774	Brian Laudrup		2	8.5
775	Ivan Zamorano	REAL	8	7.5
776	Jose Amavisca	REAL	0	5.8
777	Raul Gonzalez	REAL	10	0.8
778	Juan Esnaider	REAL	0	4.5
779	Harald Brattbakk	ROSE	4	0.8
780	Vegard Heggem	ROSE	2	1.2
782	Steffen Iversen	ROSE	0	0.9
783	Trond Soltvedt	ROSE	0	1.5
784	Sergei Rodionov	SPAR	0	2.2
785	Mukhsin Mukhamadiev	SPAR	0	1.7
786	Andrei Tikhonov	SPAR	2	1.9
787	Sergei Yuran	SPAR	6	3.5
788	Valeri Velichko	SPAR	0	0.7
789	Sergei Nagornyak	SPAR	0	1.2
790	Valeri Schmarov	SPAR	0	2.0
792	Marius Lacatus	STEA	0	4.7
793	Vioel Oin	STEA	0	2.0
794	Adrian Ilie	STEA	2	2.0
795	Catalin Popa	STEA	0	1.5
796	Ion Vladoiu	STEA	0	2.8

LEAGUE LEADERS AFTER SIX ROUNDS

Number	Team	Manager	Pts	Pos
03065	AUB ** JUVENTUS	Anwar Jaafar	116	1
04436	SANTA POSERS	E. Rattray	115	2
03786	THOM BHOYS ON TOUR 1888 (G.B.T.P.)	Patrice Kinloch	114	3
02843	NATH'S NASTY NUTTERS	Marish Nath	113	4
02535	FC AMERICA	Joseph Costa	109	5
03352	DEJA VOODOO	J.J. Whiting	109	5
04729	GRIZZLIES	Chris Macknie	109	5
02520	HALF PAST XI	D. Curry	108	6
02952	SHAMROCK SPARTAK	Fergal Ryan	108	6
03003	IYAZ RESERVES	Sam Tarakowicq	108	6
03953	STOP BHAFC DYING OF GREED	Roy Chuter	108	6
04386	THE JETTA'S EUROPEAN ADVENTURE NO.	Mr. S. Rattray	108	6
04423	F.C. KACAR	Rebecca Kacar	108	6
03750	LA SQUADRA DELLA SIGNORA	Robin P. Johnson	107	7
03760	EURO STARS	Nigel Ellison	107	7
03778	THE FIRE BELCHERS (EURO) (TOUR)	Peter Andrew	107	7
04406	FRANTASTIC XI	Paul Francis	107	7
04692	LUDLOW LIONS	Rick Lima	107	7
04695	LUDLOW LUSITANO	R. Michael Lima	107	7
04846	FEYO ROVERS	O.A. Okusanya	107	7

CONCACAF

Ready for take-off

Scott Gleba looks at the contenders for the third CONCACAF Gold Cup

AFTER switching the dates of the competition from July in odd-numbered years to January in even-numbered ones, the 1996 CONCACAF Gold Cup was finally scheduled to kick off just as this edition of *WORLD SOCCER* went on sale.

A change in dates was not the only modification made by the CONCACAF hierarchy in an attempt to increase the event's exposure. Firstly, the Gold Cup was expanded from eight to nine teams with the addition of a South American invitee – World champions Brazil.

Secondly, three sites in California – Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, San Diego's Jack Murphy Stadium and Anaheim Stadium – will be used for the first time, signifying that the growth of the CONCACAF championship has been steady if not spectacular.

In 1991, the USA defeated Honduras on penalty kicks after a 0-0 draw in front of 40,000 fans at the Memorial Coliseum, to win the inaugural championship.

Two years later, Mexico crushed the defending champions 4-0 in the final before a huge crowd, 130,800, at the Azteca in Mexico City.

Now that the Gold Cup has established itself as one of the world's best attended sporting events and has undergone some major changes, thoughts have shifted to potential champions and outstanding performers.

Will the US or Mexico make it two out of three?

Will Brazil add another trophy to an already crowded cabinet?

Or will an outsider cause a surprise?

GROUP A

GUATEMALA did not play a full international in the three years before the 1995 UNCAF Nations Cup, but they still managed to finish second in the Central American championship. Their good fortune, however, may stop there.

Incredibly, they have qualified for two Gold Cups, though they have scored only three goals in 10 qualifying and final matches. Edwin Westphal perennially tops the league scoring chart, but he did not even play in the UNCAF Nations Cup. Julio Rodas of El Salvador's FAS must make an impact if Guatemala are to get past the first round.

MEXICO have fallen on tough times since crashing out of the 1995 Copa America to the US, but they should easily win this group.

In his second time around as coach, Bora Milutinovic has discarded many veterans and has paid the price for the changes with defeats by Yugoslavia and the Slovenia Under-23 team.

Of the veterans Milutinovic has retained, watch out for Ramon Ramirez, Luis Garcia and Claudio Suarez. Goalkeeper Jorge Campos has been named by default, because all potential heirs to his throne have not performed with any great distinction of late.

If Garcia is not provided with good opportunities from a questionable midfield, Mexico will struggle.

ST VINCENT & THE GRENADINES lost the 1995 Shell Caribbean Cup to Trinidad & Tobago, 5-0, but still qualified for the Gold Cup as Caribbean runners-up.

Except for an appearance in the second qualifying round for USA '94, against Mexico, Costa Rica and Honduras, they have little experience outside the Caribbean. An 11-0 away defeat to Mexico was the low point. Rodney Jack of Torquay United scored 13 goals in qualifying but few of the others are of his standard.

GROUP B

CONCACAF was ecstatic when the world champions **BRAZIL** accepted an invitation, although the players who graced World Cup '94 will not be there.

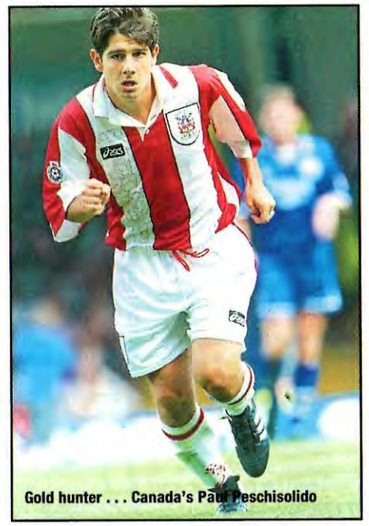
Forwards Caio, Favio and Leandro are expected to lead the charge, and the midfield is solid, as Palmeiras team-mates Amaral and Flavio Conceicao link with Botafogo's Beto and Iranildo. Danrlei of Libertadores champions Gremio will be in goal. The youngsters will have to adjust quickly to the opposition. They are in the most difficult group and have had poor results against both Canada and Honduras over the past 18 months.

CANADA have never fared well at the Gold Cup, but are sending what is possibly their best-ever side to an international competition.

Forward Alex Bunbury was voted 1995 Canadian Player of the Year because of his outstanding play with Maritimo in Portugal. He pairs with Stoke's Paul Peschisolido in what is arguably the best strike force in CONCACAF.

Veteran defender Randy Samuel has found new life with Port Vale after eight years in Holland, while goalkeeper Craig Forrest of Ipswich is one of the best around.

In six Gold Cup games, however, Canada managed only a single victory, while conceding 20 goals.



Gold hunter . . . Canada's Paul Peschisolido

DEFENDING Central American champions **HONDURAS** can never be discounted. Unfortunately they are in a very difficult group.

Eduardo Bennett of Argentinos Juniors has seven Gold Cup goals, and others to watch include the versatile Eugenio Dolmo Flores and midfielder Alex Pineda. Forward Milton Nunez should provide the injection of youth that Honduras need.

GROUP C

EL SALVADOR are considered one of the Central American powers, but had never qualified for a Gold Cup until this year. More than two-thirds of the squad will consist of players from champions FAS and Luis Angel Firpo. Like Guatemala, a lack of regular international matches will hurt them, but they are still dangerous. Raul Diaz Arce is the UNCAF Nations Cup all-time leading scorer with seven goals, while midfielders Carlos Castro Borja, Guillermo Rivera and Mauricio Cienfuegos form a potent partnership.

CARIBBEAN champions **TRINIDAD & TOBAGO** have a good chance to win the Gold Cup. They have several experienced but young players currently performing in Europe with great distinction, including Dwight Yorke of Aston Villa and Russell Latapy of Porto. Lapaty scored three goals in a recent friendly against Norway. T & T, however, lack experienced defenders.

THE preliminary Gold Cup roster contained possibly the largest collection of players in the **UNITES STATES**' soccer history, including Kasey Keller (Millwall), Marcelo Balboa (Leon, Mexico), Alexi Lalas (Padova), Mike Burns (Viborg, Denmark), Steve Pittman (Partick Thistle), John Harkes (West Ham), Tab Ramos (UNAM, Mexico).

Up front is where coach Steve Sampson will have to make difficult decisions. Ernie Stewart of Holland's Willem II seems to have a hold on one of the spots, but the other is up for grabs.

CONCACAF CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

Saprissa take title again

FOR THE second time in three years, Deportivo Saprissa of Costa Rica won the CONCACAF club championship, played in San Jose, Costa Rica.

Saprissa drew 2-2 with LD Alajuela to clinch first place in the final four. The result left Municipal of Guatemala's players holding their heads in frustration, knowing that if Alajuela had scored one more goal the title would have been theirs, based on goal differential.

Alajuela finished third and CS Moulien of Guadeloupe fourth.

BRIAN HARRIS

CANADA

Bobby signs on again

A NEW contract for popular national team coach Bobby Lenarduzzi and a favourable World Cup draw brought smiles to the faces of Canadian soccer fans.

Under his charge Canada have defeated Northern Ireland, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, lost to Denmark, Chile (away) and Turkey (twice), and drew with Portugal and Chile (home).

Canada had been hoping for a World Cup draw with El Salvador, considered to be the weakest of the three Central American nations, and got their wish.

COLIN JOSE

MEXICO

Bielsa's boys in the lead

THE first half of the 1995-96 season in Mexico ended with America as 'Winter champions'. They are now managed by former Atlas and Newell's Old Boys boss, Marcelo Bielsa and are playing direct practical soccer.

They scored 31 goals (the highest in the league with Atlas), and conceded only 16 (the lowest with Cruz Azul).

The other *Televisa* team Necaxa, managed by Manuel Lauente were level on points, although there is a great difference between the two in popularity. While America average 33,055 for each of their 17 matches, Necaxa had drawn only 2,200 even though both play in the Azteca Stadium.

The title is far from decided. Between first and tenth place there is a difference of only six points, or two victories.

CARLOS F RAMIREZ

UNITED STATES

Firmani joins Metrostars

MLS side New York-New Jersey Metrostars have hired former New York Cosmos coach Eddie Firmani as their coach.

Frank Stapleton has been named as head coach of Boston's New England Revolution, the job for which Jack Charlton had been tipped, while South African international Doctor Khumalo is to join the Columbus Crew.

Japan Kamo keeps top job

SHU KAMO's contract as manager of the Japan national team has been extended to last to the end of the next World Cup qualifiers, albeit amid considerable confusion.

The FA's Technical Committee thought they had offered the job to Nelsinho, Brazilian manager of Verdy Kawasaki, and he and the club were under the impression that he had accepted.

The association's Executive Committee chose otherwise, and announced the result to the media without telling anyone in advance.

Nelsinho was furious, especially at suggestions – which he hotly refuted – that he had asked for too much money and had refused to work with a Japanese coach.

There have been various managerial changes on the club front, too. Kashima Antlers have started to build for next year with the signing of Bragantino's Joao Carlos Da Silva Costa to replace Edu.

Yokohama Flugels will bring in Otacilio Goncalves to take charge next season. He was head coach of the Brazil national team in 1991.

Fukuoka Blux have signed former Yokohama Marinos manager Hidehiko Shimizu to replace Marion Olguin, but the Argentinian flavour stays with the arrival of Carlos Oscar Pachame as head coach.

Kashiwa Reysol have a provisional managerial contract with Brazilian Nicanor, the former head coach at Bellmare Hiratsuka.

THERE was a double surprise in the J.League Suntory Championship when Yokohama Marinos won both matches 1-0 against the defending champions, Verdy Kawasaki.

Even one month earlier, few would have thought that Marinos could play twice against Verdy without conceding a goal, but Verdy had slipped after clinching the Nicos title. Marinos, meanwhile, were climbing, and wound up their League programme with a glorious 3-0 rout of Kashima Antlers.

The championship is theoretically played home and away between the winners of the League's first and second stages. This year's matches, however, were played at Tokyo's National Stadium, which is near to both Kawasaki and Yokohama.

The wins were built on tight defending and swift counter-attacks, but the tactics were never negative. Verdy's pressure was efficiently absorbed, and the Marinos forwards revelled in the space they were given.

Manager Hiroshi Hayano took over in difficult circumstances when Jorge Solari fell ill, but rebuilt the team with a 3-5-2 formation and tactics that are clearly his own.

After the changes of recent years, the old power structure has briefly reasserted itself. Marinos and Verdy (as Nissan and Yomiuri) had contested almost every title from the mid-1980s, and were selected to stage the showpiece kicking off the J.League in May 1993.

The atmosphere was quieter than it was in 1993, but the stands were again full and the football was better in terms of both speed of judgement and tactical sophistication. The J.League has come further than anyone had anticipated at that time.

"We have been waiting for this," said Hayano. "We have been building through the Nicos Series, and the players were ready, both mentally and physically. We maintained the pressure from start to finish."

David Bisconti scored the winner in the first game, after 48 minutes, and Masami Ihara headed the decider in the second match, after 29 minutes.

THE open secret that Nagoya Grampus Eight were the J.League's most exciting team in 1995 was confirmed at the awards ceremony, when Yugoslavian forward Dragan Stojkovic was named Player of the Year and the club's French manager, Arsene Wenger, took the Manager of the Year award.

Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi of Yokohama Marinos, who took over from then national team goalkeeper Shigetatsu Matsunaga midway through the Suntory Series, was named Rookie of the Year.

Masahiro Fukuda of Urawa Red Diamonds won the Golden Boots as top scorer, the first Japanese to do so. Shinichiro Obata received the award of Best Referee, and a special chairman's award was given to former Marinos striker Ramon Diaz for services to Japanese football.

Best Eleven: Kikuchi (Verdy), Ihara (Marinos), Suzuki (Marinos), Soma (Antlers), Buchwald (Urawa), Hashiratani (Verdy), Bismarck (Verdy), Stojkovic (Grampus), Dukuda (Reds), Miura (Verdy), and Morishima (Cerezo).

With the expansion of the J.League to 16 teams, the two-stage format is being abandoned in favour of a single league to run from March 16 to November 9, with a break between May 18 and August 28.

That break will make space for national team preparation for the Atlanta Olympics and the revived J.League Yamazaki-Nabisco Cup, Japan's league cup competition, which was played for three years from 1992. This will now be played home and away in two preliminary leagues of eight teams from June 1 to July 3 and from August 10-21, followed by the semi-finals on September 4 and final on September 25.

JAPAN's stranglehold on the Asian Cup-winners Cup looked set to continue as Bellmare Hiratsuka and holders Yokohama Flugels continued to advance and were drawn together in the semi-final.

Both had to rely on their second teams in the quarter-final round due to J.League and Emperor's Cup commitments.

Bellmare followed a 6-0 home win over Petrokimia Putra with a 1-1 draw in Indonesia, and Flugels won 2-0 away to New Radiant of the Maldives and 5-0 at home.

The other semi-finalists are Talaba of Iraq and Al Riyadh of Saudi Arabia.

Verdy Kawasaki's second team – the seniors were again playing in the J.League Suntory Championship – fell to the same teams in identical circumstances to last year in the round-robin East Asian quarter-final of the Asian Club Championship in Indonesia.

They beat Persib of Indonesia 3-2, drew 0-0 with the reigning champion, Thai Farmers Bank, and lost 1-0 to Ilwha Chunma of South Korea.

MIKE PLASTOW & MICHI ISHIJIMA

Champions . . . Marinos celebrate their title win

Majed returns in triumph

HE INSPIRED his club with two superb goals in their opening fixture, added another couple in the second, laid on the only goal for a team-mate in the third, grabbed his fifth goal in the fourth, and lasted a hectic 10-day schedule, which he decorated with all the flair, flicks and feints of old.

Yes, Majed Abdullah was back at the age of 36, to become top scorer of the 13th Gulf Co-Operation Council club competition.

Majed, the world's most-capped player, guided his side, Al Nasr, to their first cup success under coach Jean Fernandez.

The surprise came from Dhofar of Oman, runners-up with nine points, three adrift of Al Nasr, thanks mainly to their midfield schemer, Hani Al-Dhabet.

Sharjah of the United Arab Emirates, coached by former Brazilian international Amarildo, finished third and were the only side to beat Al Nasr, 2-0 in the final match of the round-robin tournament of six clubs, held in Manama, Bahrain.

Al Salmiya of Kuwait and hosts East Rifaa finished fourth and fifth respectively, with Al Arabi of Qatar at the bottom.

● AL NASR also are through to the semi-final of the Asian Club Championship, and face the defending champions, Thai Farmers Bank of Thailand. Illhwa Chunma of South Korea meet Saipa of Iran in the other semi-final.

In the West Asian quarter-finals, Al Nasr won a round-robin mini-tournament of four clubs with seven points, beating Al Arabi of Qatar 2-1, drawing 0-0 with Saipa, and winning 1-0 over Kopetdag of Turkmenistan. Saipa booked the other ticket to the semi-finals with five points.

SAUDI ARABIA

WIM VAN HANEGEM steered Al Hilal to the first of the season's three domestic trophies, the FA Cup Final, one month after his appointment as manager of the Riyadh giants. Al Hilal beat Al Ittifaq 4-2 to win the trophy for a record fourth time.

BAHRAIN

INTERNATIONAL midfielder Abdulnasser Hassan inspired his club, Al Muharraq, to win the first edition of the Super Cup in Bahrain. His 25-yard drive, after the interval, was enough for his side to beat West Riffa, at the National Stadium in Manama.

OMAN

HUNGARIAN Jozeph Jili has coached Al Nasr, to their first Sultan Cup victory. Three goals in the second half were enough for Al Nasr to dispose of Al Ahly, who had opened the scoring.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

TOMISLAV IVIC, the recently-departed coach of Croatia, is the new manager of the UAE national team. He has signed a two-year contract.

SYRIA

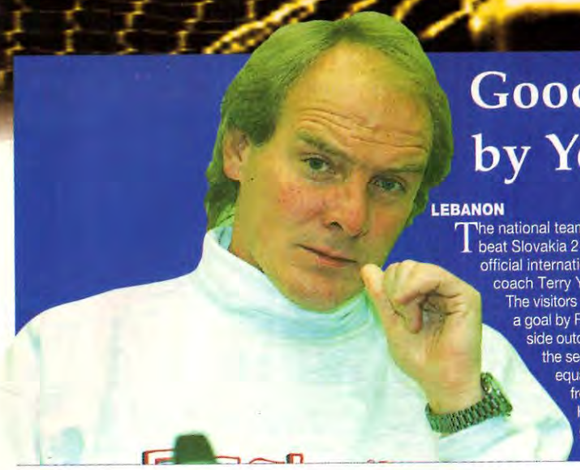
HOTTIN top the Syrian First Division for the first time ever, recording 23 points out of possible 29. Cup-winners Al Karama are five points behind.

IRAQ

IN THE first football transaction between Iraq and South Korea, keeper Imad Hashem and midfielder Abbas Obaid (both internationals) have signed for LG Cheetahs. Their club, Air Force FC, were paid £80,000.

IRAN

LEADERS Bahman were held to a 0-0 draw by Pirouzi in front of 70,000 fans. Bahman are now two points clear of Pirouzi, and have two games in hand. In the fourth round of the Iranian Cup, Ararat beat Pas 2-1 to book themselves a quarter-final place against Zobahan of Isfahan.



Good start by Yorath

LEBANON

The national team came from behind to beat Slovakia 2-1 in Beirut, in the first official international match under Welsh coach Terry Yorath ***(pictured left)***. The visitors led in the 36th minute with a goal by Robert Sminik; but the local side outclassed their opponents in the second period. Jamal Taha equalised, and five minutes from the end, skipper Hassan Ayyoub's penalty gave them victory.

SOUTH KOREA

A GOLDEN goal in the third and final play-off gave Illhwa Chunma their third successive Korean League title.

They beat Posco Atoms with Lee San-Yaun's goal in extra time of the deciding match, after two draws.

A goal by Yugoslav Rade Bogdanovic earned Posco a 1-1 result in the first game, after Kim Ill Joo had put Illhwa in front. In the second match, Hwang Sun-Hong scored twice for the Atoms, only for international Sin Tae-Yong to reply with a solo effort and a penalty. Illhwa then went ahead with a goal from Ko Jeong-Woon, but Posco skipper Hong Myung-Bo equalised in the last seconds.

QATAR

CHAMPIONS Al Shabab have made a moderate start to the new season, drawing their first three matches and trailing leaders Al Wasl by four points.

MALAYSIA

SEVERAL top players in the Malaysian Pro League have been banned for life after being convicted of match-rigging.

Six of the Sabah team, including former national captain Matlan Marjan, have been suspended for offences committed last season, and five of the Kedah squad who did the League-and-Cup double in 1993 have received the same punishment.

Selangor won the 74th Malaysian Cup competition by beating the League champions, Pahang, by the only goal. Much-travelled Australian Dave Mitchell scored, to give Selangor the trophy for the 26th time – a record.

Another Aussie, Scott Ollerenshaw of Sabah, vowed never to take another penalty after his club lost to Pahang in the two-leg semi-final.

Ollerenshaw missed one in the first leg, which Pahang won 1-0. Then, after he had scored the only goal in the second leg, he missed another during the tiebreak, which Pahang won 4-2.

Selangor beat Sarawak 3-2 away in the other semi-final, then drew 0-0 at home.

HONG KONG

SOUTH CHINA are the first-round winners of Hong Kong's championship.

They thumped third-placed Golden 6-0, with former Costa Rican youth international Ricky Cheng claiming a hat-trick, to deny Instant-Dict, who had led for most of the season.

Former Dundee player Paul Ritchie leads the scoring lists with nine goals, helped by his tally of six in Happy Valley's 11-1 win over Club. This was the League's highest score since a 13-0 victory by South China over Club, who have now leaked 44 goals in eight games.

CAMBODIA

THE NEW semi-professional League in Cambodia started in January, with eight teams in each of the two divisions. Regulations limit players signed from foreign clubs to three per team, but foreigners working in Cambodia can also take part.

INDIA

EAST BENGAL of Calcutta are India's champions for the 23rd time, amid considerable controversy.

They finished the IFA Super Division season with an almost identical record to that of their great rivals, Mohun Bagan, both winning 13 games, drawing three and losing two. But East Bengal were awarded the title because IFA rules state that in such circumstances, the team conceding the fewest goals take precedence over the team scoring the most.

So Mohun Bagan, with goal figures of 38-10, were second to East Bengal, with 30-8, despite the fact that the champions provided rather less entertainment overall.

The 95th Rovers Cup competition in Bombay was won by the Oman Club, who beat Sesa, from Goa, in the final with goals by Yasin Aby Napili and Suroor Al Deeb (penalty).

Correspondents: MOHAMED CHBARO, AZAM MAHMOOD, G C DAS, ZHENG MING, TAI WAI CHEUNG, KAVEH AGAH

China

Sichuan scandal still simmers

SHANGHAI's championship success – their first Chinese title for 34 years – was overshadowed by further controversy and unfavourable publicity, most of it concerning the game between Sichuan and Jilin.

As reported in the December issue of *WORLD SOCCER*, Sichuan won 6-0, only their third victory in 16 games, after Jilin players had virtually abandoned the match because of the bias shown by referee Dai Yuguang. At times they even passed deliberately to opponents, to show their disgust.

The row over this travesty of soccer continued for weeks after TV film had shown that Yuguang had left the pitch and ordered cameramen to stop filming, presumably so that no evidence would remain.

The CFA eventually ordered Jilin to apologise in writing, but there has been no official word of any punishment of the referee. Fans have been widely critical of the ruling body, who have appeared desperate to keep Sichuan in the top division because they are by far the biggest commercial enterprise in Chinese soccer, with more than 1.2million spectators since the pro game began in 1994.

Eventually Sichuan just avoided going down, finishing 10th of the 12 clubs, level on points with Qingdao but given the higher place because of a 'countback' involving results of the games between the two.

A week after the 6-0 fiasco there was another disturbance, in a Second Division game between Hunan and Locomotive. A linesman signalled offside as Locomotive scored an equaliser, but the referee, Wu Dongming, allowed the goal to stand. Hundreds of fans invaded the pitch in protest, and the match was abandoned.

Shanghai made sure of their title with two games to go, beating Shandong 3-1 as Beijing, held 0-0 by Qingdao, lost their last chance to close the gap.

Shandong had some consolation when they beat Shanghai 2-0 in the Cup Final.

PROFESSIONAL football's growth in China is continuing to cause problems, and the FA has produced some new measures aimed at limiting player power and ensuring that the bigger clubs do not become too strong.

One new rule, intended to ensure that wealthier clubs cannot attempt to buy their way out of trouble, says that no player can be transferred for higher salaries and bonuses if, at the time of the sale, the signing club is in a lower position in the League table than the selling club. Another rule is that no player with a relegated club can be transferred without CFA permission.

ZHENG MING

Australia

Trimboli's Tasman triumph

PAUL TRIMBOLI, who had been in some danger of becoming Australian soccer's forgotten man after two years away from international football, destroyed New Zealand in the second leg of the Trans Tasman Cup.

Trimboli, the little South Melbourne midfielder, created all the goals in a 3-0 victory in the second leg at Newcastle. His deft through passes set up Damian Mori and Joe Spiteri for goals in the 31st and 52nd minutes respectively. Sandwiched between them was a Paul Wade penalty, seconds before half-time, after Mori had been brought down. His chance had been produced by another astute Trimboli pass.

The victory enabled the Socceroos to lift the Cup. The first encounter at Christchurch a week earlier had been drawn 0-0.

Soon afterwards, New Zealand suffered an even bigger blow when coach Bobby Clark resigned, citing the local association's financial problems as the main reason for the decision.

Fiji

Tavua take first title

THE Inter-District Championship, Fiji's premier domestic competition, has been won by Tavua for the first time.

Tavua have been improving steadily since gaining senior status in 1989. But their only previous major honour was in 1994, with victory at the FACT (Football Association Cup Tournament), and they were definitely the underdogs when going into the IDC final against Nadi.

Under Fijian soccer's most accomplished coach, Billy Singh, Nadi had been very impressive during their march to the trophy decider, which culminated with a 1-0 defeat of League champions BA in the semi-final.

The BA encounter, however, undoubtedly drained the Greens and they conceded a goal after only 44 seconds against Tavua. Viliame Batidegei netted again close range after 14 minutes, following Nadi defensive lethargy.

Tavua's 2-0 triumph proved, once again, that money can not guarantee success in soccer. Their budget was only five per cent of Suva's, yet the capital city side failed to qualify from their preliminary group.

PAUL MOON

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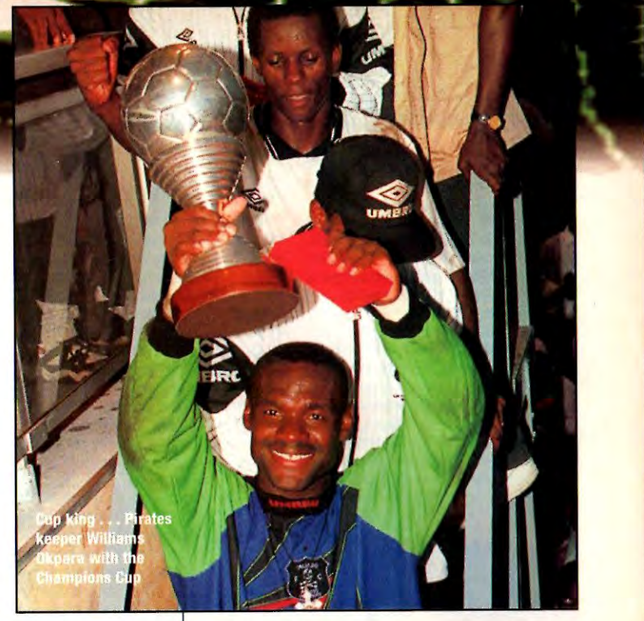
Pirates strike gold

Mark Gleeson on Orlando Pirates' historic victory in the African Champions Cup



Cup king . . . Pirates keeper Williams Ukpera with the Champions Cup

ORLANDO PIRATES put on a marvellously gutsy performance to become the first team from southern Africa to win the African Champions Cup.

The South African club beat favourites ASEC Abidjan of the Ivory Coast 3-2 on aggregate, but their victory was achieved away from home in the most hostile of circumstances.

Pirates, the first South African club to reach the final of an African club competition, looked dead and buried after a dreadful performance at home in the first leg – both on and off the field.

They were held 2-2 by ASEC at Johannesburg's Soccer City, had captain Innocent Mncwango sent off in the first half and saw their fans instigate a riot that held the game up for some eight minutes.

The red card sparked discontent in the stands and a small section of travelling ASEC supporters were pelted with an assortment of missiles by the home contingent.

Panic-stricken ASEC fans spilt over onto the pitch.

To make matters worse, coach Joe Frickleton was fired days after the 2-2 draw, leaving the team rudderless for their return match in Abidjan.

But it was in front of 60,000 Ivorian fans that the South Africans came alive, weathering an almost non-stop attacking storm from the home team and going on to win the match 1-0.

The goal, after 73 minutes, came in bizarre fashion but there had been warning signs earlier as Pirates looked dangerous on the counter-attack. An ASEC foray forward was cleared by Mark Fish, whose long ball over the halfway line caught out two Ivorian defenders, who tumbled over each other, allowing Jerry Skosana a free run on goal.

ALGERIA'S JS Kabylie have joined an elite band of teams who have won both the African Champions Cup and Cup-winners Cup after a 3-2 aggregate victory over Julius Berger of Nigeria in the Cup-winners Cup Final. Kabylie, previously known as JE Tiozi-Ouzou, won the Champions Cup, back in 1981 and 1990.

The first leg of the Final, in Lagos, ended 1-1. In the second leg, in Algiers, JSK went behind to a 17th minute goal but came back for a 2-1 triumph.

Central Africa

FIFA is demanding **CAMEROON**'s federation hold a new elective congress by the end of February to choose a new leadership in the wake of government interference in the running of soccer.

Canon Yaounde beat relegated Ocean Kribi 3-1 in the Cup Final.

Cheminots beat Patronage 1-0 in the **CONGO** national championship final to win the First Division title. Malonga scored the only goal of the game.

Ivory Coast won the four-nation international tournament in Libreville, **GABON**, with a 3-1 penalty shoot-out victory over Algeria after a goalless draw in the Final. The hosts finished fourth after losing to Cameroon in the third place play-off.

North Africa

ALGERIA Under-23 international Zouani Bilal has been given a one-year ban from all international activity for his part in a brawl which marred the match against Guinea at the All-Africa Games in Zimbabwe last year.

Frenchman Henri Michel's first assignment as the new national coach of **MOROCCO** was successfully concluded with a 2-0 win over Mali in a friendly international in Rabat. The goals were scored by Abdelilah Fahmi and French-based Mustapha Hadji. Raja Casablanca have a handy eight-point lead at the top of the table over SCC Mohammedia.

Brazilian coach Paulo Maria has been given a one-year suspension by the CAF after running onto the field to protest at a refereeing decision during El Hilal of **SUDAN**'s loss in last year's African Champions Cup to Zimbabwe's Dynamos.

In **TUNISIA** Esperance of Tunis have signed Ugandan international Jackson Mayanja from Egypt's El Masry. He replaces Zambian striker Kenneth Malitoli. Fourth-placed Esperance are 12 points behind leaders Club Africain after 11 rounds of the championship.

Southern Africa

ZAMBIA retained their southern African junior title with victory in the Confederation of Southern African Football Association's Under-20 tournament in Maseru. They beat South Africa 1-0 in the final, with hosts Lesotho finishing third with a 3-1 win over Swaziland in the third-place match.

Black Africa have won the championship in **NAMIBIA** from Walvis Bay club Blue Waters and will go into the African Champions Cup this year. The Cup was won by popular Windhoek club Tigers. Three national team stalwarts Sylvester Goraseb, Mohamed Ouseb and Ricardo Mannetti are on trial with Saarbrucken in the German Second Division.

Cape Town Spurs, double-winners in **SOUTH AFRICA**, now look likely to be sold after the most successful season in their history, relocate and change their name. Prospective buyers include the cable TV channel *Supersport*, who also own Second Division winners Pretoria City. South Africa's leading international goalscorer Doctor Khumalo has signed for Columbus Crew in the new Major League Soccer in the US.

Mbabane Highlanders won the **SWAZILAND** championship by five points from champions Eleven Men in Flight.

Former Anderlecht midfielder Charles Musonda has failed in his bid to win back a place in the **ZAMBIA** side after extensive training with the squad. Musonda was forced to retire with a knee injury in 1994 and was hoping to make a comeback during the Nations Cup finals.

West Africa

ASEC Abidjan won their sixth Cup in the **IVORY COAST** with a 2-0 victory over Stade Abidjan, giving them the League and Cup double after a controversial decision to strip Africa Sports of the title. Sports, who headed the table by a single point, were stripped of six points after the league found one of their players, Bambi Ladji, had been registered with a false identity and birthdate and actually belonged to another club. The decision meant ASEC, runners up in the 1995 African Champions Cup, have now won five successive league titles.

Isaac Paha has been named as the new coach of **GHANA**'s Olympic team in place of Brazilian Ismael Kurtz, who will concentrate solely on the senior side. Ghana meet Cameroon in March to decide one of Africa's three representatives at the Atlanta Games. Goldfields have a two-point lead over Okwawu United in the title race.

In **GUINEA**, Horoya coach Mory Conde may not work for the next six months after receiving a ban from the CAF for taunting spectators during his club's Champions Cup tie against Stade Malien.

NIGER have been thrown out of the World Cup qualifiers as a sign of FIFA's dissatisfaction with their government's decision to boot out the previous federation and install a new regime. Their clubs also have been banned from this year's African club competitions.

NIGERIA won the Afro-Asian Cup to Africa with a 1-0 win over Uzbekistan in the second leg tie in Lagos. The victory, secured by a late goal by substitute Emmanuel Amunike, gave the Super Eagles a 4-2 aggregate win. Bendel Insurance won the West African Football Union (WAFU) Cup for the third successive year with a 5-2 aggregate win over Ivorian club Africa Sports. The Nigerians won the first leg 4-1 in Benin City and then held out for a 1-1 draw in the return leg in Abidjan.

Shooting Stars completed the double with a 2-0 win over Third Division Katsina United in the FA Cup final. Stars go into the African Champions Cup next year, the Third Division team enter the Cup-winners Cup and Gombe United will represent Nigeria in the CAF Cup.

East Africa

In **KENYA**, While traditional rivals Gor Mahia and Kenya Breweries were involved in a scrap for league honours, unfancied Rivatex won the Golden Moi Cup with a 2-0 win over Ulinzi Stars in the final in Nairobi.

In **RWANDA**, the army team, APR-FC, have won the championship in their first season of participation. The side, created after the country's takeover by the rebel Patriotic Front, edged out perennial favourites Kiyovu Sports and Rayon Sports.

German Peter Obermeyer has been named as **TANZANIA'S** new national coach in time for the start of the 1998 World Cup qualifiers.

MARK GLEESON

ZANZIBAR came of age in the 21st edition of the East and Central Africa Challenge Cup, held in **UGANDA**. They won 1-0 over equally surprising finalists, the Ugandan B team.

The demise of the Ugandan A team in the group stages leaves the hosts with major problems.

Uganda's coach Tim Ayieko immediately resigned after losing 1-0 to Zanzibar, after only three months in the job.

PHIL MINSHULL

Diary DECEMBER

FRIDAY 1

ENGLAND: Match-fixing charges against Bruce Grobbelaar, Hans Segers and John Fashanu are adjourned until January 3.
GERMANY: Germany's players will receive a bonus of £43,000 each if they win Euro '96.
HOLLAND: Ajax's match against Willem II is postponed because of a police strike.
ITALY: A magistrate in Ancona opens inquiries into claims that two players and an official from Birmingham City assaulted local club coach Massimo Cacciatori after the previous week's Anglo-Italian Cup tie.
JAMAICA: The federation halts the local championship after the Referees' Association calls a strike in protest at attacks by players and spectators on other players, referees and linesmen.

Fatal car crash . . . Edmundo

SATURDAY, ... 2

ACTION: Rioting supporters of South African club Orlando Pirates force a 10-minute hold-up in their African Champions Cup Final against ASEC Abidjan after captain Innocent Mncwango is sent off. The match ends 2-2 . . . Etoile Sportif du Sahel of Tunisia beat Kalloum of Guinea 2-0 to win the CAF Cup . . . in Germany, second-placed Bayern Munich beat Schalke 4-0 to stay in contention with Dortmund . . . PSV Eindhoven miss a chance to narrow the gap on Dutch leaders Ajax when they lose 2-1 at home to Sparta Rotterdam . . . Spanish champions Real Madrid find form at last in a 4-1 thrashing of Sevilla while Barcelona struggle to a 1-1 draw against Santander.
BRAZIL: Brazilian and Flamengo striker Edmundo is involved in a fatal crash when the jeep he is driving collides with another car. Three people are killed including a 20-year-old passenger in Edmundo's car. Edmundo has 10 stitches in a cut.
PORTUGAL: Sporting Lisbon borrow Czech striker Tomas Skuhravy from Italian Serie B club Genoa for the rest of the season with the option of making the move permanent.
SWITZERLAND: FIFA bans Niger from the draw for the 1998 World Cup preliminaries in reaction to the government's dissolution of the national federation.

SUNDAY 3

ACTION: George Weah scores a brilliant late winner for Milan again Lazio as they extend their lead in Italy over Parma to four points . . . Spanish leaders Atletico Madrid are beaten for only the second time this season, away to Betis.
ENGLAND: Glen Kirton, director of Euro '96, denies reports that the FA is facing a £5million deficit on the finals next summer.
FRANCE: More dope test failures – Bordeaux reserve goalkeeper Franck Fontan is banned for two months but forward Stephane Paille, formerly of Mulhouse, asks for a second test.

MONDAY 4

ENGLAND: Leeds seek clarification from the Ghana FA over whether it intends to insists on striker Tony Yeboah's release for up to six weeks before and around the African Nations Cup in January-February.
FRANCE: The new stadium that will host the 1998 World Cup Final is named the 'Stade de France' by Sports Minister Guy Drut. The Final will be held on July 12, 1998 . . . the French federation confirms reports of dope-test failures but insists social drugs were involved and not stimulants.
ITALY: Eugenio Fascetti replaces Beppe Materazzi as coach of Bari.
SPAIN: Atletico Madrid and Oviedo ask FIFA to arbitrate in the case of Russian midfielder Viktor Onopko, whom both clubs want to sign.

TUESDAY 5

ACTION: Benfica crash again to Bayern Munich in the UEFA Cup third round, this time by 3-1 at home in the second legs . . . holders Yokohama Flugels of Japan beat New Radiant of the Maldives 5-0 in the second round of the quarter-finals of the sixth Asian Cup-winners Cup.
ENGLAND: Barcelona's Danish international Ronnie Ekelund joins First Division Birmingham on loan . . . Queens Park Rangers agree to sell Australian international Ned Zelic back to Germany, after only two months, to Eintracht Frankfurt . . . Paul Ince is again overlooked as Terry Venables names his squad for the friendly against Portugal.
ITALY: Struggling Torino replace coach Nedo Sonetti with Manlio Scoglio in the wake of the 5-0 weekend defeat by Juventus . . . Bari's new coach, Eugenio Fascetti, says he is confident he can lead them away from the relegation zone.
SOUTH AFRICA: National coach Clive Barker is forced, by Orlando Pirates' African Champions Cup demands, to leave out several key players from a 20-man squad to play Germany in Johannesburg on December 15.
SPAIN: Sevilla's Croatian striker Davor Suker escapes with a one-match ban after being sent off for swearing at the referee during Saturday's 4-1 League defeat by Real Madrid.
SWITZERLAND: FIFA says that, despite strike problems, the World Cup draw will go ahead in Paris as planned . . . FIFA also expresses doubts over English club Wimbledon's plans to move from London to Dublin.

WEDNESDAY 6

ACTION: Moscow Spartak win 1-0 away to Legia to seal their 100 per cent record in the Champions League.
BRAZIL: Edmundo is told he will be charged with responsiblity for the traffic accident which killed three people at the weekend . . . Pele says he believes his son, Edinho, may be good enough to keep goal for Brazil.
ENGLAND: John Fashanu is told by the FA that his Zambian-backed bid to become a FIFA-licensed agent is a non-starter . . . Tottenham's Romanian reserve, Ilie Dumitrescu, appeals for other English managers to give him a chance . . . Leeds' Phil Masinga and Lucas Radebe receive special dispensation to report back to South Africa later than their national team-mates for the African Nations Cup . . . Aston Villa's top scorer Dwight Yorke is called up by Trinidad and Tobago for the CONCACAF Gold Cup in the United States in January . . . West Ham goalkeeper Ludek Miklosko says he is ready to come out of international retirement to help the Czech Republic at Euro '96.
JAPAN: Yokohama Marinos win the J.League title when they beat defending champions Verdy Kawasaki 1-0 in the second leg of the championship play-off and 2-0 on aggregate.
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND: Jack Charlton's team expect to have twice as many fans as Holland at the Euro '96 play-off in Liverpool after the Dutch take up only 11,000 of the 16,300 tickets allocated by UEFA.

THURSDAY 7

ACTION: Honduras and Guatemala secure places in the CONCACAF Gold Cup after semi-final victories over Costa Rica and El Salvador . . . Slavia Prague beat Lens in the UEFA Cup but neighbours Sparta go out to Milan.
AUSTRALIA: Striker Damian Mori scores the fastest goal in the history of Australia's national soccer league, and one of the quickest ever, when he lobs home after only four seconds playing for Adelaide City against Sydney Utd.
BRAZIL: Santos apparently blow their chances of reaching the National Championship final when they crash 4-1 away to Fluminense in the first leg of their semi-final. In the other semi-final, Tulio hits his 21st goal of the competition as Botafogo draw 1-1 away to Cruzeiro.
HOLLAND: Winston Bogarde replaces Frank de Boer in the Dutch squad named for the Euro '96 play-off. Squad: Van der Sar (Ajax), De Goey (Feyenoord); Reiziger, Blind, Bogarde (Ajax), Numan (PSV), De Kock (Roda); R de Boer, Davids (Ajax), Richard Witschge (Bordeaux), Seedorf (Sampdoria), Winter (Lazio); Kluivert, Overmars (Ajax), Bergkamp, Helder (Arsenal), Mulder (Schalke).
RUSSIA: Oleg Romantsev quits as Moscow Spartak coach to prepare the national team for the Euro '96 finals.
UNITED NATIONS: The UN announces a programme of thousands of soccer matches being played around the world beginning on Saturday in a 24-hour-long celebration honouring the organisation's 50th anniversary.

Leaving Spartak . . . Oleg Romantsev

FRIDAY 8

ACTION: Algeria's Jeunesse Sportive de Kabylie win the African Cup-winners Cup when they beat Julius Berger of Nigeria 2-1 in the second leg of the Final for a 3-2 win on aggregate.
BOLIVIA: State President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada prepares to travel to Paris in an effort to dissuade FIFA from banning international matches at altitudes greater than 2,500 metres. Such a measure, says a federation official, would ban international competition in at least half of Bolivia's cities.
FRANCE: Lyon and ex-Marseille goalkeeper Pascal Olmeta is placed under investigation by magistrates on suspicion of using counterfeit banknotes. Olmeta denies the charges.
SCOTLAND: Dundee sell Denmark's Morten Wieghorst to Celtic.
SWITZERLAND: UEFA selects Rome to stage the UEFA Champions League Final on May 22 and Ibrox Park, Glasgow, for the Cup-winners Cup Final on May 8. The draws are made for the Cup-winners and UEFA Cup quarter-finals.

SATURDAY 9

ACTION: Boca Juniors, missing Diego Maradona because of a stomach upset, see their Argentinian championship hopes vanish in a 2-1 defeat by Estudiantes de La Plata. Five players, including Boca goalkeeper Carlos Navarro Montoya, are sent off . . . Newcastle's lead at the top of the English table is cut to four points after they lose 1-0 away to Chelsea . . . Paris Saint-Germain thrash champions Nantes 5-0 to go six points clear at the top in France . . . German champions Borussia Dortmund win 1-0 away to Freiburg to secure the winter break 'championship' . . . two early goals by Bulgarian forward Luboslav Penev lift Spanish leaders Atletico Madrid to a 3-1 victory over second-placed Barcelona.
FRANCE: FIFA general secretary Sepp Blatter promises action to try to restrict the ever-growing international calendar to protect players from stress and injuries caused by too many matches.
ITALY: Roma bid £6m for Real Madrid forward Raul Gonzalez.

Player of the Year . . . Julen Guerrero

SUNDAY 10

ACTION: Superb goalkeeping by Napoli's Giuseppe Taglialatela, including a first-half penalty save from Roberto Baggio, holds Italian leaders Milan to a 0-0 draw . . . Benfica move up into third place in Portugal after Boavista's surprise 2-0 defeat at Maritimo. Benfica beat Campomaiorense 2-0 the previous evening . . . Espanyol leapfrog over neighbours Barcelona into second place in Spain after a hard-fought 3-1 win over champions Real Madrid.
FRANCE: FIFA confirms the World Cup qualifying format proposals but drops its own European schedule (seven groups of seven teams) in favour of UEFA's suggested scheme of five five-team groups and four six-team groups followed by a lucky losers' play-off series.
GERMANY: National coach Berti Vogts, missing Heiko Herrlich, Matthias Sammer, Mario Basler, Oliver Kahn, Thomas Strunz, Markus Babbel and Mehmet Scholl, names an experimental squad for the forthcoming international against South Africa in Johannesburg. Uncapped inclusions are Hansa Rostock's Stefan Beinlich and Rene Schneider.

MONDAY 11

ARGENTINA: Diego Maradona says he is considering offers to play for Japanese and Greek clubs in 1996.
ENGLAND: Sheffield Wednesday's £4m Yugoslav swoop for Darko Kovacevic and Dejan Stefanovic is given the go-ahead by the Department of Employment . . . Birmingham City withdraw from a deal to sign Barcelona midfielder Ronnie Ekelund after failing to agree terms.
FRANCE: France defender William Prunier and Bordeaux part company following an incident on Saturday in which the player made gestures to fans during a 3-1 home defeat to Bastia . . . Mali withdraws from the 1998 World Cup qualifying competition just 24 hours before the draw, reducing the entry to 172 nations – 36 from Africa. Mali's absence would give Morocco a bye into the second round of the African qualifiers. FIFA's executive formally agrees that provisional members Bosnia can compete . . . FIFA president Joao Havelange suffers an embarrassing defeat at the hands of his executive in his bid to switch the 1997 World Youth Cup back from Malaysia to Nigeria . . . FIFA says that the 1999 women's World Cup is almost certain to take place in the United States after rival candidates Australia and Chile pull out . . . FIFA withdraws the licence of Norwegian soccer agent Rune Hauge after ruling he had continued to negotiate transfer deals while suspended . . . South Korea's bidding committee general secretary Song Young-shik says it estimates total revenue from ticket sales, television rights and merchandising at a record £400m – if it is granted the 2002 World Cup . . . FIFA formally presents Jacques Glassmann. the ex-Valenciennes player who blew the whistle on the Marseille bribery scandal in 1993, with its 1995 fair play award.
SPAIN: Real Madrid invite Spanish-born astronaut Miguel Lopez Alegria to take the honorary kick-off at their next home game.
UNITED STATES: The pay dispute between the US federation and its women players, which is threatening to keep the top Americans out of the Olympics, may be nearing resolution, says executive director Hank Steinbrecher.
UKRAINE: Anatoly Konkov and Viktor Kolotov are to be replaced as coaches to Ukraine's national and Olympic teams.

TUESDAY 12

ACTION: Atletico Mineiro beat Rosario Central of Argentina 4-0 in the first leg of the Final of the Conmebol Cup . . . England draw 1-1 with Portugal at Wembley.
ARGENTINA: Diego Maradona learns that he and his former personal manager, Guillermo Coppola, have been acquitted in Rome of drug trafficking charges. However, he threatens to quit Boca Juniors if the new president, Mauricio Macri, goes ahead and hires Carlos Bilardo as new coach.
BOLIVIA: The state senate condemns FIFA's threat to bar the capital, La Paz, from hosting South American zone World Cup qualifying matches because of its altitude.
FRANCE: The draw for the World Cup qualifying competition goes ahead in strike-battered Paris after the French government climbs down from its attempt to bar the Nigerian delegation in line with a European Union agreement.
ITALY: Birmingham City captain Liam Daish denies charges from Italy that he was responsible for an attack on Ancona trainer Massimo Cacciatori at the Anglo-Italian Cup.
SPAIN: Julen Guerrero, of Athletic Bilbao, is named Player of the Year by the Spanish federation. Zaragoza win Team of the Year and Real Madrid's Raul Gonzalez is named most promising youngster. Croat Davor Suker, of Sevilla, is voted best foreign player. Chilean Ivan Zamorano, of Real Madrid, is rewarded for being last season's top scorer with 28 goals while Pedro Luis Jaro, of Betis, collects the goalkeeping award. Manager of the Year is Arsenio Iglesias, formerly of Deportivo La Coruna.

WEDNESDAY 13

ACTION: Holland beat the Irish Republic 2-0 in their Euro '96 play-off at Anfield, Liverpool.
BRAZIL: Botafogo beat Santos 2-1 in the first leg of the national championship final.
ENGLAND: Blackburn splash £2.8m on Wales defender Chris Coleman from Crystal Palace.
FRANCE: Five engineers and local government and football officials have jail terms, imposed for their complicity in the Bastia stadium disaster of 1992, commuted to suspended sentences on appeal.
HOLLAND: Former Dutch international winger Regi Blinker quits Feyenoord for Swiss club Lucerne.
SWEDEN: Jerry Mansson, of Second Division Brommapojkarna, is suspended for two years after failing a dope test. Mansson claims his drink was 'spiked' in a bar before the game.

Thursday 14

ARGENTINA: Diego Maradona apparently fulfils his threat to quit Boca Juniors after a showdown meeting with president Mauricio Macri, at which he had offered to coach the team instead of Carlos Bilardo.
BOLIVIA: The federation says it will appeal against FIFA's decision not to allow South American zone World Cup qualifying matches to be played in La Paz.
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND: Jack Charlton says he will wait until after Christmas before deciding about his future.
SPAIN: FIFA decide that Oviedo, and not Atletico Madrid, have priority rights in the row over Viktor Onopko . . . Barcelona forward Jordi Cruyff undergoes knee surgery which, it is reported later by the surgical team, has almost certainly saved his career . . . Real Madrid's Danish midfielder Michael Laudrup says he may go to the United States or Japan if his contract is not renewed at the season's end . . . Real Madrid have reportedly approached Barcelona's highly-rated brothers Roger and Oscar Garcia – as well as Ivan de la Pena . . . Barcelona agree to loan Ronnie Ekelund to Manchester City and not Birmingham City as expected.
UNITED STATES: Central American champions Honduras are drawn to face Canada in the opening game of the CONCACAF Gold Cup – then will play 'guest' World Cup holders, Brazil . . . Carlos Valderrama, captain of Colombia's national team, signs to play in US Major League Soccer.

FRIDAY 15

ACTION: South Africa draw 0-0 with Germany in Johannesburg.
ARGENTINA: A radio talk show poll of Boca Juniors fans ends with a majority backing Carlos Bilardo as new coach, with only a third of callers wanting Diego Maradona to stay.
ENGLAND: UEFA's executive confirms Rome for the Champions League Cup Final but switches the venue for the Cup-winners' Final from Ibrox to the King Baudouin stadium in Brussels. UEFA also withdraws from England the extra 'fair play' place in next season's UEFA Cup because of the lack of commitment demonstrated by Wimbledon and Tottenham in last summer's Intertoto Cup . . . the FA reaffirms its support for England coach Terry Venables after he loses a court case involving his business dealings.
ITALY: The latest tax evasion lists includes, among personality names, Paul Gascoigne (ex-Lazio), Dino Zoff (Lazio president) and Sergio Cragnotti (Lazio owner).
LUXEMBOURG: The European Court of Justice delivers its verdict in the Jean-Marc Bosman case, outlawing transfer fees for players moving from one country to another after contract expiry and outlawing foreign player restrictions within domestic competitions.
NIGERIA: The military government gives permission for the national team to compete, after all, at the African Nations Cup in South Africa.
SCOTLAND: Hampden Park is awarded £23m by the Millennium Commission towards redevelopment costs.
SIERRA LEONE: The national team go on strike in protest at unpaid bonuses and expenses and threaten to refuse to play in the Nations Cup in South Africa.
THAILAND: Hundreds of fans go on the rampage, burning down two tents as they swarmed to buy tickets for the football final of the Southeast Asian Games between Thailand and Vietnam.

SATURDAY 16

ACTION: Orlando Pirates of South Africa win the African Champions Cup with an unexpected 1-0 second leg victory away to Ivory Coast's ASEC after a 2-2 draw in the first leg . . . Diego Maradona scores from a penalty in what may be his final game for Boca Juniors, a 2-2 draw with Deportivo in the final game of the season . . . in France, PSG take a six-point lead into the winter break after a 1-1 draw with Saint-Etienne.
SWITZERLAND: UEFA says that the Jean-Marc Bosman judgement affects only the international transfer within the European Union of players no longer under contract. As for the United Kingdom, a transfer fee would be due for an out-of-contract player moving from Scotland to England because the UK is one country as far as the EU is concerned. UEFA says its restrictions on the number of non-nationals who can play in European club competitions can remain effective because clubs are "representing their countries".

Dutch delight . . . Kluivert celebrates at Anfield

Diary DECEMBER

SUNDAY 17

ACTION: Saprissa of Costa Rica win the CONCACAF Club Cup despite being held 2-2 by Alajuelense (Costa Rica) in their final match . . . Velez Sarsfield win their third Argentinian championship after a 3-0 win over Independiente . . . Tulio scores the decisive only goal as Botofogo hold Santos 1-1 and win their first Brazilian national championship . . . in Holland, Ajax, playing their first League match since winning the world club title in Tokyo, defeat Utrecht 3-0 . . . Juventus rejoin the leading pack in Italy by defeating Inter 1-0 . . . Atletico Madrid maintain their two-point lead over Espanyol in Spain thanks to a last-minute goal by Jose Luis Caminero.
ENGLAND: The draw for Euro '96 is made in Birmingham.
FRANCE: The FFF invites Brazil, Italy and England to a four-team tournament in 1997.

MONDAY, ... 18

SWITZERLAND: Portuguese coach Artur Jorge is poised to lead the Swiss national team into the European Championship finals in England.
ITALY: Adriano Galliani resigns as vice-president of Milan in protest at the refereeing of Sunday's match against Torino. Milan owner Silvio Berlusconi is not expected to accept the resignation.
FRANCE: Basile Boli says he is about to quit Monaco to play in Japan.
GERMANY: All transfer fees could soon be abolished in Germany in the wake of Bosman, says Reinhard Rauball, the former Borussia Dortmund president who is a leading sports law expert . . . the German-based International Federation for Football History and Statistics says it has discovered evidence that the Italian federation bribed the Greek federation ahead of a qualifying match for the 1934 World Cup.
ENGLAND: The FA launches a campaign to help English clubs restore lost pride in Europe. Proposals are that clubs would have four days clear of domestic fixtures before European matches and a bye in the two-leg League Cup second round . . . Blackburn's Graeme Le Saux is ruled out of Euro '96 after suffering serious ankle damage in a 1-0 win over Middlesbrough.

Out of Euro '96 . . . Marc Overmars

TUESDAY 19

BELGIUM: UEFA's European competitions will be deemed illegal unless the controversial three-foreigner rule is scrapped immediately says the European Union.
ENGLAND: The FA halts ticket sales on nine Euro '96 matches following an avalanche of applications. Two of England's Group A matches and all three of Scotland's are now officially sold out. Ticket sales are also suspended for Italy v Germany and all three Group D matches at Nottingham Forest.
SWITZERLAND: England drops out of the top 20 in FIFA's world rankings while the Republic of Ireland is down to 28 after dropping 19 places in a year. Brazil remain top.

WEDNESDAY 20

ACTION: Brazil beat Colombia 3-1 in Manaus.
ARGENTINA: Diego Maradona agrees, after all, to stay with Boca Juniors.
GERMANY: Munich 1860 take advantage of the Bosman case ruling when they decide not to sign Harald Cerny from Tirol Innsbruck until the end of the season, when he will be out of contract and not command a fee.
ITALY: Further revelations emerge about how Italy broke the rules regarding substitutions and naturalised players in their victory over Greece in the 1934 World Cup qualifiers.
SCOTLAND: Rangers confirm plans to build a permanent memorial to 66 fans who died in the Ibrox disaster 25 years ago.
SWITZERLAND: FIFA names Jurgen Klinsmann, Paolo Maldini and George Weah as front-runners for its player of the year award, to be announced at an ESM Gala in Milan in January.

THURSDAY 21

FRANCE: Bordeaux defender William Prunier flies to England for a two-week trial with Manchester United.
GERMANY: Sports legal specialist Reinhard Rauball says he can see no legal objections to players undertaking temporary 'parking' arrangements abroad to obtain free transfers between two clubs in the same EU country.
GHANA: The federation agrees that Tony Yeboah can delay his departure for the African Nations Cup until after the FA Cup third round tie against Derby on January 7.
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND: Jack Charlton resigns as manager of the national team.

FRIDAY 22

ARGENTINA: Diego Maradona joins a government campaign aimed at preventing drug abuse among young people.
BRAZIL: National coach Mario Zagalo names his squad of 20 for the CONCACAF Gold Cup in the United States without European-based Juninho, Ronaldo and Roberto Carlos. His squad: Dida (Cruzeiro), Danrley (Gremio); Ze Maria (Portuguesa), Ze Roberto (Portuguesa), Andre Luis (Sao Paulo), Narciso (Santos), Alexandre Lopes (Corinthians), Carlinhos (Guarani), Gelson (Cruzeiro); Amaral (Palmeiras), Flavio Conceicao (Palmeiras), Ze Elias (Corinthians), Souza (Corinthians), Beto (Botafogo), Iranildo (Botafogo), Arilson (Kaiserslautern); Caio (Internazionale), Savio (Flamengo), Leandro (Internacional), Jamelli (Santos).
ENGLAND: The Premier League, under pressure from Manchester City, scraps its three-foreigner regulation . . . Everton are told they must release Nigerian striker Daniel Amokachi for the African Nations Cup . . . the FA rules out a possible rematch against the Irish Republic . . . England fixtures in the run-up to Euro '96 include Bulgaria (March 27), Croatia (April 24) and Hungary (May 18).
FRANCE: Two more professional players have failed dope tests, says the French federation, bringing the total this season to five. They are named in the media as defenders Oumar Dieng of Paris Saint-Germain and Gilles Hampartzoumian of Cannes.
HOLLAND: Ajax's Marc Overmars is ruled out of Euro '96 after exploratory surgery reveals serious ligament damage to his left knee, injured in Wednesday's 1-0 League win over De Graafschap . . . clubmate Patrick Kluivert is told he will be prosecuted for causing death by dangerous driving following an accident last September.
ROMANIA: The federation awards the national squad a £1.4m Christmas bonus for qualifying for Euro '96. Players who appeared in more than 60 percent of Romania's group games will receive £55,000 each.
SENEGAL: Senegal appoints German Peter Schnittger as national technical director.
SOUTH AFRICA: Doctor Khumalo is assigned to the Columbus Crew in the new US Major League Soccer operation.
SPAIN: Protesting Barcelona fans lose their court case alleging negligence against the companies which laid the Nou Camp pitch.
SWITZERLAND: FIFA and UEFA, having met to consider the implications of the Bosman judgement, issue a statement insisting that UEFA is entitled to maintain foreign player restrictions in its club competitions and that action will be taken to prevent players from border-hopping.
UNITED STATES: US coach Steve Sampson depends on World Cup veterans for the CONCACAF Gold Cup, reuniting 11 members of the squad from USA '94, including Eric Wynalda, Ernie Stewart, Marcelo Balboa and Alexi Lalas.

SATURDAY 23

ACTION: Anderlecht beat Ekeren 4-2 to stay just two points behind Club Brugge at the top in Belgium . . . Italian leaders Milan stay a point ahead of Fiorentina after the clubs draw 2-2 . . . Sporting Lisbon thrash Gil Vicente 4-1 to stay second in Portugal.

SUNDAY 24

ACTION: Barcelona win the Ecuador title, beating Espoli 1-0 in the play-off final return after wining the first game 2-1 . . . Ajax mark up their 17th win in 18 Dutch League matches as they beat NEC Nijmegen 3-1 with goals from Jari Litmanen, Finidi George and Ronald de Boer (penalty) . . . Olimpia of Asuncion win the Paraguayan title, beating Cerro Porteno 1-0 for a 1-1 aggregate and then triumphing 8-7 on penalties.

MONDAY 25

ENGLAND: FA spokesman David Davies says that if Euro '96 is a success then the FA "would look into the possibility of applying to staging the next available World Cup in 2006".

Award winner . . . Krasimir Balakov

TUESDAY 26

BULGARIA: Krasimir Balakov of Stuttgart is voted Bulgarian Footballer of the Year, followed by Parma's Hristo Stoichkov.
FRANCE: George Weah is named European Footballer of the Year by France Football ahead of Jurgen Klinsmann and Jari Litmanen.
LIBYA: Libyan TV reports suspensions are to be lifted on official team sports, including soccer, in a bid to try to defy UN sanctions.
NIGERIA: National coach Jo Bonfrere says his squad will prepare in Kenya for the African Nations Cup finals after the Dutch embassy in Lagos refuses entry visas for a planned training camp in Holland.
SOUTH AFRICA: Captain Steve Komphela and goalkeeper Steve Crowley are dropped from South Africa's 22-man squad for the African Nations Cup finals.

WEDNESDAY 27

ACTION: Japan's Bellmare Hiratsuka beat Talaba of Iraq 2-1 in Yokohama to win the Asian Cup-winners Cup.
BRAZIL: Botafogo confirm that coach Paulo Autuori will join Portugal's Benfica in July . . . in another Portuguese deal, Vasco da Gama sign Brazilian midfielder Roberto Assis on a six-month loan from Sporting Lisbon.
ENGLAND: Manchester City offer a two-month loan trial to the Benfica central defender Eduard Abazaj, an Albanian international with a Portuguese passport . . . Aston Villa decide to instal undersoil heating – but not for another 18 months so as not to cause pitch problems ahead of Euro '96.
SCOTLAND: Celtic's youngsters benefit from a guest training session with one of the Ajax coaching team, Heini Otto.
SPAIN: Michael Laudrup complains about the imposition of a club fine from Real Madrid because he missed a training session after returning separately from a match to attend to business matters . . . Compostela president Jose Maria Caneda says his club intend to play all five foreign imports in their next League match.
TURKEY: Galatasaray buy Dutch defender Ulrich Van Gobbel from Feyenoord.

OBITUARY

EDDIE CLAMP . . . former Wolves and England wing-half who won two League championships and an FA Cup Final with the Molineux club, dies aged 61. Clamp earned four England caps and played in the 1958 World Cup finals in Sweden.

THURSDAY 28

PORTUGAL: Benfica confirm that Brazilian trainer Paulo Autuori will join them as chief coach next season and work in tandem with returning technical director Toni.
SOUTH AFRICA: Lucas Radebe is withdrawn from the South African squad for the African Nations Cup because of continuing concern over his recovery from knee trouble.
UKRAINE: Kiev Dynamo coach Jozef Sabo is appointed chief coach to the national side while remaining as boss of Kiev.

FRIDAY 29

ENGLAND: Premiership strugglers Bolton sign Austrian international striker Ralph Hasenhuttel on trial from Casino Salzburg . . . Liverpool skipper Ian Rush is awarded the MBE in the New Year honours.

SATURDAY 30

NIGERIA: Defending champions Nigeria withdraw from the African Nations Cup because of fears for the safety of players and supporters in the wake of protests over Nigeria's human rights record.
PORTUGAL: Two fans die of heart attacks as second-placed Sporting Lisbon and mid-table Chaves draw 1-1 in a match halted in the 88th minute by a floodlight failure.

SUNDAY 31

SOUTH AFRICA: South African soccer chief Solomon Morewa calls for world pressure to be exerted on Nigeria to change their mind about withdrawing from the Africa Nations Cup finals in South Africa.

TRANSFER TRAIL *(Loan moves in italics)*

ABEL Resino (G)	out of contract	Rayo Vallecano
Festus **AGU** (M)	Bolivar	Compostela
*Roberto **ASSIS** (M)*	*Sporting Lisbon*	*Vasco da Gama*
Mikkel **BECK** (F)	Fortuna Cologne	Rangers
Nathan **BLAKE** (F)	Sheffield Utd	Bolton
Regi **BLINKER** (F)	Feyenoord	Lucerne*
Basile **BOLI** (D)	Monaco	Urawa Red Diamonds
Chris **COLEMAN** (D)	Crystal Palace	Blackburn
*Ronnie **EKELUND** (F)*	*Barcelona*	*Man City*
Paul **EVANS** (G)	Wits Univ (SA)	Leeds Utd
*Niklas **GUDMUNDSSON** (F)*	*Halmstad*	*Blackburn*
Josko **JELICIC** (M)	Croatia Zagreb	Sevilla
Doctor **KHUMALO** (M)	Kaizer Chiefs (SA)	Columbus Crew (MLS)
Andoni **LAKABEG** (D)	Ath. Bilbao	Celta Vigo
Diego **LATORRE** (F)	Tenerife	Salamanca
Gustavo **LOPEZ** (D)	Independiente	Real Zaragoza
Neil **MOSS** (G)	Bournemouth	Southampton
Steve **NICOL** (M)	Notts Co	Sheffield Wed
Viktor **ONOPKO** (D)	Moscow Spartak	Real Oviedo
Carlos **PAVON** (M)	Real Espana (Hon)	Real Valladolid
*Dejan **PETKOVIC** (M)*	*Red Star Belgrade*	*Real Madrid*
*Sebastian **RAMBERT** (D)*	*Internazionale*	*Real Zaragoza*
Andy **RHODES** (G)	St Johnstone	Airdrie
Pedro **RIESCO** (M)	La Coruna	Albacete
Scott **SELLARS** (M)	Newcastle Utd	Bolton Wanderers
Kubilay **TURKYILMAZ** (F)	Galatasaray	Grasshopper Zurich
Carlos **VALDERRAMA** (M)	At. Nacional (Col)	MLS*
Ulrich **VAN GOBBEL** (D)	Feyenoord	Galatasaray
Goran **VUCEVIC** (M)	Barcelona	Merida
Noel **WHELAN** (F)	Leeds Utd	Coventry City
Morten **WIEGHORST** (D)	Dundee	Celtic
Dean **WINDASS** (F)	Hull City	Aberdeen
*Ned **ZELIC** (D)*	*QPR*	*Eintracht Frankfurt*

MANAGERS ON THE MOVE

Paulo **AUTUORI**	Botafogo	Benfica
Dave **BASSETT**	Sheffield Utd	out of contract
Bobby **CLARK**	New Zealand	out of contract
Eugenio **FASCETTI**	out of contract	Bari
Artur **JORGE**	out of contract	Switzerland
Anatoly **KONKOV**	Ukraine	out of contract
Giuseppe **MATERAZZI**	Bari	out of contract
Lothar **OSIANDER**	Atlanta Ruckus (A-League)	LA Galaxy (MLS)
Oleg **ROMANTSEV**	Moscow Spartak	Russia
Franco **SCOGLIO**	out of contract	Torino
Nedo **SONETTI**	Torino	out of contract

X-WORD

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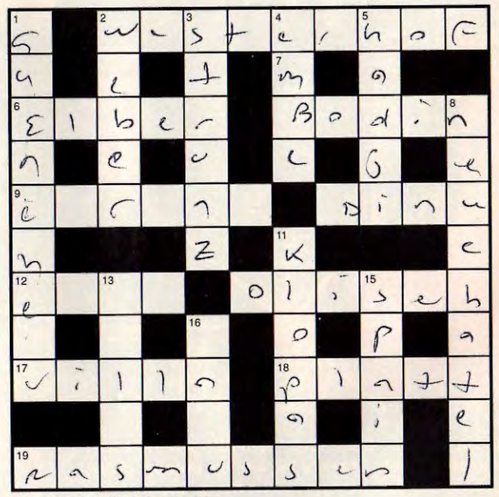
JANUARY WINNERS
Yoav Veichselfish, Israel; Boris Bozhilov, Ottawa, Canada; Peter Van Nielsen, Denmark; Nial Farry, Cork, Ireland; Sierro Laurent, Sion, Switzerland.

JANUARY SOLUTION
Across: 1 Witschge 7 Scala 8 Lalas 9 Hakan 10 Hagi 13 Metz 14 Silva 17 Dunga 18 Hadji 19 Smolarek
Down: 1 Wyss 2 Trapattoni 3 Chagas 4 Gill 5 Bastis 6 El Salvador 11 Smidts 12 Michel 15 Daum 16 Vink

CLUES ACROSS
2 ..... Dutch-born coach who guided Nigeria to African Cup success (9)
6 ..... Stuttgart's Brazilian forward previously with Milan and Servette (5)
7 ..... Wales left-back contracted to England's Second Division Swindon (5)
9 ..... City in which the Qemal Stafa national stadium is sited (6)
10 ..... Romania's former 75-cap player, Sports Minister and national coach (4)
12 ..... Veteran former Denmark keeper latterly with Odense Boldklub (4)
14 ..... Nigerian midfielder of Liegeois, Reggiana and now Koln (6)
17 ..... Ex-Argentine forward twice on target in England's 1981 FA Cup final replay (5)
18 ..... Arsenal and England midfield man back from Italy (5)
19 ..... Aab and Denmark midfielder with Stuttgart from 1989 to 1991 (9)

CLUES DOWN
1 ..... Bulgarian forward with Ipswich Town, 1991-95 (9)
2 ..... Anderlecht Croat now a Belgian international forward (5)
3 ..... Germany midfielder back at Bayern following his Stuttgart spell (6)
4 ..... 1994 Cameroon World Cup defender briefly at Belenenses (4)
5 ..... Moroccan international midfield man in France with Nancy (5)
8 ..... Home town of Switzerland's Xamax (9)
11 ..... Apollon USA midfielder longtime associated with AEK Athens (6)
13 ..... Latvia's national coach (5)
15 ..... World Cup hosts, 1982 (5)
16 ..... Marcos de Morais, Brazilian right-back-turned-midfielder (4)



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FOOTBALL COACHES AND TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

1995 - What a year!

THE growth of AFCAT in grass roots football coaching has been underlined by the progress made in 1995. Membership is now over 3,000 enthusiastic coaches and teachers in over 40 different countries, with some governing bodies abroad also joining up as members.

It is very pleasing that such a strong justification for a user-friendly Coaching Association has been forthcoming.

AFCAT has been active abroad this year with presentations in the USA, Spain, Cyprus, South Africa and Republic of Ireland. Indeed the standing of AFCAT overseas appears excellent and while attending the European Union of Football Trainers Symposium recently, invitations to present sessions in other countries, including Argentina, were made.

The message that 'something new' in coaching is occurring in the UK is a welcome compliment as is the invitation to present our ideas around the world. For acting as our overseas ambassadors AFCAT would like to thank Don Howe, John Cartwright, Sue Lopez, Graham Smith, Gordon Strachan, John Morton, Dennis Mortimer, Colin Morris, Dai Jones, Phil Darren and Graham Morgan.

On the domestic front, the regional days have continued to be a success and create much discussion during the breaks. A growing schedule of events covering most of the country has proved we will always be well-supported. AFCAT would like to thank all those presenters who have given of their time and expertise. They're too many to mention on this page, but they know who they are.

The Final Session of 1995 could not have been more exciting – the Ajax Youth Director of Coaching, Co Ardiaanse, combined with 'Performance Guru' Harald Oyen (a star of the 1995 Convention) ensured a fantastic day at Glasgow Rangers just as our delegation of coaches returned from helping to launch the AFCAT South Africa Convention.

Looking at 1996 is an exciting prospect. Euro '96 will ensure a focus on football at the top level in Europe. However, the grass roots of the game should also be reaching a watershed with many changes possible – and needed. AFCAT and its sister grass roots project,the Schools Football *initiative*, have been helping with a far-reaching project, the British Schools Football Foundation, which will significantly change the approach to schools football for every girl and boy, in every school in the country.

Also, Phil Darren and John Morton, two active AFCAT members (Phil is also the SF*i* National Co-ordinator and John will be Chairman of ESFA next season) are to be congratulated on being nominated and accepted onto the FA Committee looking into the FA Teachers syllabus. Grass roots problems need grass roots solutions and AFCAT members have an expertise here that is second to none.

The voice and thoughts of grass roots football will increase dramatically in 1996 and AFCT, SF*i* and BSFF will become very important players in the National Game.

WATCH THIS SPACE!

Lining-up . . . the UEFT committee

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BELGIUM

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

WEEKEND

SERAING 1 (Swerdtfegers 71)
ST TRUIDEN 2 (Vanmarseniille 12, Abeels 25) Att: 4,500

LOMMEL 1 (Cannaerts 68)
STANDARD 0 Att: 8,500

ANTWERP 0
CERCLE BRUGES1 (Lawers 16) Att: 2,700

HARELBEKE 2 (N'Gonge 56, Frunza 88)
LIERSE 3 (Peeters 20, 51, Snoecks 71) Att: 7,000

BEVEREN 1 (Udovic 5)
RWDM 1 (Larus 90) Att: 5,000

ANDERLECHT 4 (Zetterberg 25, Bosman 39, Bayard 48, Boffin 60)
AALST 0 Att: 19,500

MECHELEN 1 (Dodik 69)
CHARLEROI 2 (Balog 29, Misse-Misse 37). Att: 6,800

CLUB BRUGGE 3 (Reniel 54, Van der Heyden 58, Stanic 85)
EKEREN 1 (Radzinski 72) Att: 12,700

GENT 0
WAREGEM 0 Att: 7,000

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

WEEKEND

BELGIAN CUP – 4TH RND

BEERSCHOT 3 KORTRIJK 0

BEVEREN 3 MOESKROEN 1

BOOM 0 WAREGEM 3

CERCLE BRUGES 2 LOMMEL 1

CHARLEROI 0 STANDARD 1

CLUB BRUGGE 1 POEDERLEE 0

DENDERLEEUW 1 GENK 2

EKEREN 1 OOSTENDE 0

HARELBEKE 0 AALST 1

LOKEREN 2 GENT 1

RWDM 2 HERENTALS 1

ST TRUIDEN 3 RACING JET 0

ANDERLECHT 2 LIERSE 1 *(Aet)*

MECHELEN 1 ANTWERP 3 *(Aet)*

DEINZE 1 SERAING 1
(Aet, Seraing won on pens)

WESTERLO 0 RC TILLEUR 0
(Aet, RC Tilleur won on pens)

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

WEEKEND

ST TRUIDEN 2 (Van Houdt 12, Coenen 15)
CLUB BRUGGE 4 (Verheyen 26, Staelens 27, Stanic 46, 49) Att: 12,000

STANDARD 1 (Rychkov 40)
GENT 1 (N'Tamack 29) Att: 11,000

CERCLE BRUGES 0
LOMMEL 1 (Scavone 70) Att: 3,500

LIERSE 1 (De Souza 23)
ANTWERP 2 (Porte 10, Milosevic 57) Att: 7,000

RWDM 3 (Sabbadini 7, Wyts 33, Pierre 44)
HARLEBEKE 1 (Yousfi 39) Att: 3,000

AALST 5 (De Meyst 3, Ebiede 26, Van Ankeren 61, Paazs 75, 83)
BEVEREN 1 (Van Overtvelt 44) Att: 6,500

CHARLEROI 1 (Krncevic 4)
ANDERLECHT 3 (Bosman 25, 45 Preko 44) Att: 14,000

EKEREN 1 (Hofmans 65)
MECHELEN 0 Att: 2,500

WAREGEM 0
SERAING 3 (Bisconti 14, Edmilson 26, Lawaree 89) Att: 4,500

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Club Brugge	20	13	5	2	46	17	44
Anderlecht	20	13	3	4	47	22	42
Lierse	20	10	7	3	35	23	37
RWDM	20	8	8	4	23	18	32
Cercle Bruges	20	7	9	4	29	26	30
Mechelen	20	8	5	7	25	28	29
Charleroi	20	7	8	5	36	37	29
Standard Liege	20	6	9	5	27	22	27
Harelbeke	20	8	2	10	25	28	26
Eendracht Aalst	20	7	5	8	30	30	26
Antwerp	20	7	4	9	28	29	25
Germinal Ekeren	20	6	7	7	31	27	25
Lommel	20	6	5	9	22	29	23
Gent	20	5	7	8	22	31	22
St Truiden	20	5	5	10	24	37	20
Beveren	20	4	7	9	20	30	19
Seraing	20	4	4	12	25	41	16
Waregem	20	3	6	11	17	37	15

ENGLAND

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

MIDWEEK

NOTTM FOREST 1 (McGregor 19)
MAN UTD 1 (Cantona 66 pen) Att: 29,263

COCA-COLA (LEAGUE) CUP – 4TH RND

ARSENAL 2 SHEFFIELD WED 1

ASTON VILLA 1 QPR 0

LEEDS 2 BLACKBURN 1

LIVERPOOL 0 NEWCASTLE 1

MIDDLESBROUGH 0 BIRMINGHAM 0

NORWICH 0 BOLTON 0

READING 2 SOUTHAMPTON 1

WOLVES 2 COVENTRY 1

WEEKEND

WIMBLEDON 3 (Ekoku 18, Harford 21, Holdsworth 65)
NEWCASTLE 3 (Ferdinand 8, 29, Gillespie 34) Att: 18,002

MAN UTD 1 (Beckham 61)
CHELSEA 1 (Wise 53) Att: 42,019

ASTON VILLA 1 (Yorke 65)
ARSENAL 1 (Platt 60) Att: 37,770

TOTTENHAM 0
EVERTON 0 Att: 32,894

QPR 1 (McDonald 16)
MIDDLESBROUGH 1 (Morris 7) Att: 17,546

BOLTON 1 (De Freitas 67)
NOTTM FOREST 1 (Cooper 90) Att: 17,342

LIVERPOOL 1 (Collymore 67)
SOUTHAMPTON 1 (Shipperley 69) Att: 38,007

LEEDS 0
MAN CITY 1 (Creaney 60) Att: 33,249

BLACKBURN 4 (Shearer 3, 17, 64 pen, Newell 32)
WEST HAM 2 (Dicks 74 pen, Slater 86) Att: 26,638

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

MIDWEEK

SHEFFIELD WED 4 (Whittingham 25, Hirst 39, Degryse 61, Bright 72)
COVENTRY 3 (Dublin 18, 37, 56) Att: 16,229

WEEKEND

BOLTON 0
LIVERPOOL 1 (Collymore 61) Att: 21,042

CHELSEA 1 (Petrescu 43)
NEWCASTLE 0 Att: 31,098

COVENTRY 5 (Busst 40, Dublin 60, Rennie 64, Ndlovu 74, Salako 88)
BLACKBURN 0 Att: 13,376

LEEDS 1 (Jobson 76)
WIMBLEDON 1 (Leonhardsen 4) Att: 27,984

MAN UTD 2 (Cantona 19, 84)
SHEFFIELD WED 2 (Bright 60, Whittingham 79) Att: 41,849

MIDDLESBROUGH 4 (Barmby 33, 55, Stamp 54, Juninho 75)
MAN CITY 1 (Kinkladze 16) Att: 29,469

SOUTHAMPTON 0
ARSENAL 0 Att: 15,238

TOTTENHAM 1 (Sheringham 3)
QPR 0 Att: 28,851

NOTTM FOREST 1 (Stone 83)
ASTON VILLA 1 (Yorke 48) Att: 25,790

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

WEEKEND

NEWCASTLE 1 (Ferdinand 17)
EVERTON 0 Att: 36,557

LIVERPOOL 2 (Fowler 44, 87)
MAN UTD 0 Att: 40,546

WIMBLEDON 0
TOTTENHAM 1 (R. Fox 85) Att: 16,193

ASTON VILLA 4 (T. Johnson 12, Milosevic 48, 63, 80)
COVENTRY 1 (Dublin 54) Att: 28,486

ARSENAL 1 (Dixon 88)
CHELSEA 1 (Spencer 25) Att: 38,295

BLACKBURN 1 (Shearer 42)
MIDDLESBROUGH 0 Att: 27,996

SHEFFIELD WED 6 (Degryse 5, 15, Whittingham 18, Bright 67, Hirst 72, 86)
LEEDS 2 (Brolin 28, Wallace 84) Att: 24,573

WEST HAM 2 (Cottee 80, Dowie 83)
SOUTHAMPTON 1 (Bishop 22 og) Att: 18,501

QPR 2 (Osborn 41, Impey 75)
BOLTON 1 (Sellars 44) Att: 11,456

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

WEEKEND

COVENTRY 2 (Busst 48, Whelan 84)
EVERTON 1 (Rideout 67) Att: 16,639

LIVERPOOL 3 (Fowler 40, 59, 78)
ARSENAL 1 (Wright 8 pen) Att: 39,806

MAN CITY 0
CHELSEA 1 (Peacock 76) Att: 28,668

MIDDLESBROUGH 4 (Fjortoft 20, Fox 21, Morris 28, Hendrie 82)
WEST HAM 2 (Cottee 80, Dicks 86) Att: 28,640

NEWCASTLE 3 (Lee 11, 74, Ginola 25)
NOTTM FOREST 1 (Woan 14) Att: 36,531

QPR 1 (Gallen 54)
ASTON VILLA 0 Att: 14,778

SHEFF WED 2 (Hirst 14 pen, 50 pen)
SOUTHAMPTON 2 (Heaney 7, Magilton 80 pen) Att: 25,115

TOTTENHAM 2 (Sheringham 54, Armstrong 71)
BOLTON 2 (Green 77, Bergsson 79) Att: 30,702

WIMBLEDON 1 (Earle 80)
BLACKBURN 1 (Kimble 27 og) Att: 7,105

LEEDS 3 (McAllister 6 pen, Yeboah 36, Deane 73)
MAN UTD 1 (Cole 30) Att: 39,801.

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31

MIDWEEK

MAN UTD 2 (Cole 6, Keane 53)
NEWCASTLE 0 Att: 40,000

SOUTHAMPTON 0
TOTTENHAM 0 Att: 15,238

ASTON VILLA v LIVERPOOL – *postponed*

ARSENAL 3 (Wright 44, Merson 61, 83)
QPR 0 Att: 38,259

NOTTM FOREST 1 (J. Lee 6)
SHEFF WED 0 Att: 27,810

LEEDS 2 (Brolin 40, Wetherall 63)
BOLTON 0 Att: 18,414

EVERTON 4 (Short 10, Stuart 45, 60, Kanchelskis 68)
MIDDLESBROUGH 0 Att: 40,091

CHELSEA 1 (D. Petrescu 10)
WIMBLEDON 2 (Earle 34, Ekoku 38) Att: 21,906

BLACKBURN 2 (Shearer 11, Batty 50)
MAN CITY 0 Att: 28,915

WEST HAM v COVENTRY – *postponed*

WEEKEND

WEST HAM v NEWCASTLE – *postponed*

MAN UTD 2 (Cole 45, Giggs 51)
QPR 1 (Dichio 68) Att: 41,890

CHELSEA 2 (Spencer 9, 45)
LIVERPOOL 2 (McManaman 33, 76) Att: 31,137

BLACKBURN 2 (Marker 31, Shearer 41)
TOTTENHAM 1 (Sheringham 53) Att: 30,004

ARSENAL 1 (Wright 27)
WIMBLEDON 3 (Earle 36, 67, Holdsworth 50) Att: 37,640

NOTTM FOREST 1 (Pearce 8 pen)
MIDDLESBROUGH 0 Att: 27,027

ASTON VILLA v SHEFF WED – *postponed*

EVERTON 2 (Wetherall 6 og, Kanchelskis 51)
LEEDS 0 Att: 40,009

SOUTHAMPTON v MAN CITY – *postponed*

BOLTON 1 (McGinlay 16)
COVENTRY 2 (Whelan 44, Salako 90 pen) Att: 16,676

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Newcastle	20	14	3	3	40	18	45
Man United	20	11	5	4	38	22	38
Tottenham	20	9	8	3	26	19	35
Liverpool	19	10	4	5	34	16	34
Arsenal	20	9	7	4	27	15	34
Middlesbrough	20	9	6	5	23	18	33
Aston Villa	19	9	5	5	25	17	32
Leeds Utd	19	9	4	6	28	25	31
Nottm. Forest	19	7	10	2	29	27	31
Blackburn	20	8	4	8	31	25	28
Chelsea	20	7	7	6	19	21	28
Everton	20	7	5	8	27	22	26
West Ham	19	6	5	8	21	28	23
Sheffield Wed	20	5	7	8	28	30	22
Southampton	20	4	7	9	19	30	19
Wimbledon	20	4	6	10	26	40	18
QPR	20	5	3	12	15	29	18
Man City	20	4	4	12	10	30	16
Coventry City	19	3	6	10	25	41	15
Bolton	20	2	4	14	18	38	10

FRANCE

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

WEEKEND

GUINGAMP 0
PARIS SG 0 Att: 15,747

LENS 2 (Meyrieu 14, Foe 59)
METZ 0 Att: 23,063

GUEUGNON 0
AUXERRE 0 Att: 8,091

NANTES 3 (Ouedec 44, Pedros 80, Cauet 83)
MARTIGUES 0 Att: 14,859

LE HAVRE 2 (Caveglia 5, 82)
STRASBOURG 0 Att: 8,748

MONTPELLIER 2 (Lefevre 54, Sanchez 57)
LYON 1 (Chavrondier 84) Att: 8,333

BASTIA 4 (Rodriguez 23, 70, Drobnjak 64, 80 pen)
LILLE 0 Att: 4,500

MONACO 1 (Anderson 79)
NICE 0 Att: 6,000

CANNES 3 (Ferhaoui 24, Charvet 70, Micoud 87)
RENNES 0 Att: 2,000

ST ETIENNE 2 (Sandjak 3, Thimothee 12)
BORDEAUX 0 Att: 11,012

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

WEEKEND

ST ETIENNE 1 (Sechet 63 pen)
PARIS SG 1 (Dely Valdes 67) Att: 15,467

LENS 0
AUXERRE 0 Att: 23,050

NANTES 2 (N'Doram 28 pen, 66)
BORDEAUX 0 Att: 19,973

MONACO 0
BASTIA 0 Att: 3,500

GUINGAMP 0
LILLE 1 (Collot 22) Att: 6,240

STRASBOURG 2 (Mostovoi 27, Gohel 65)
LYON 2 (S. Roche 20, Maurice 85) Att: 7,589

LE HAVRE 0
RENNES 0 Att: 7,558

GUEUGNON 1 (Chandioux 24)
NICE 0 Att: 2,902

CANNES 2 (Charvet 43, Capoue 69)
MARTIGUES 1 (Mazzoncini 7)

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Paris SG	22	13	7	2	44	17	46
Lens	22	10	10	2	26	14	40
Metz	22	10	8	4	20	14	38
Auxerre	22	11	3	8	38	23	36
Nantes	22	9	9	4	26	22	36
Bastia	22	10	4	8	33	29	34
Monaco	22	9	6	7	31	27	33
Guingamp	22	8	9	5	17	15	33
Strasbourg	22	8	8	6	31	22	32
Montpellier	22	8	7	7	30	28	31
Rennes	22	8	7	7	25	26	31
Nice	22	8	4	10	25	26	28
Le Havre	22	7	6	9	19	28	27
Lyon	22	5	10	7	23	26	25
St Etienne	22	5	9	8	27	35	24
Bordeaux	22	6	4	12	22	32	22
Cannes	22	5	5	12	24	36	20
Lille	22	4	8	10	16	29	20
Martigues	22	5	3	14	18	32	18
Gueugnon	22	3	9	10	14	28	18

GERMANY

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

WEEKEND

BORUSSIA DORTMUND 3 (Moller 33, 74, P. Berger 88)
MUNICH 1860 1 (Winkerler 23) Att: 42,800

BAYERN MUNICH 4 (Sforza 21, Scholl 54, Nerlinger 62, Kostadinov 84)
SCHALKE 0 Att: 61,000

BORUSSIA MG 2 (Dahlin 26, Kastenmaier 30 pen)
UERDINGEN 1 (Meijer 23 pen) Att: 26,700

HANSA ROSTOCK 3 (Weilandt 26, R. Schneider 37, 57)
KAISERSLAUTERN 0 Att: 25,800

FREIBURG 1 (Decheiver 8)
BAYER LEVERKUSEN 0 Att: 22,000

STUTTGART 3 (Bobic 20, Balakov 83 pen, Schnoor 86 og)
HAMBURG 0 Att: 35,000

EINTRACHT FRANKFURT 3 (Schupp 7, Okocha 41, Hagner 42)
FORTUNA DUSSELDORF 0 Att: 18,000

ST PAULI 1 (Driller 29)
KARLSRUHE 1 (Kiriakov 7) Att: 19,765

KOLN 1 (Kohn 88)
WERDER BREMEN 0 Att: 26,371

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

WEEKEND

HAMBURG 5 (Ivanauskas 2, Baron 10, 17, Sport 31, Kovacevic 77)
EINTRACHT FRANKFURT 1 (Doll 75) Att: 18,376

UERDINGEN 2 (Steffen 6, Heintze 36)
ST PAULI 5 (Trulsen 10, Sobotzik 41, 53, 88, Scharping 74) Att: 9,857

FORTUNA DUSSELDORF 0
BAYERN MUNICH 2 (D. Hamann 46, Klinsmann 86) Att: 55,850

FREIBURG 0
BORUSSIA DORTMUND 1 (Ricken 48) Att: 22,500

KAISERSLAUTERN 1 (Riosche 57)
LEVERKUSEN 0 Att: 34,632

KARLSRUHE 1 (Hassler pen 75)
STUTTGART 2 (Bobic 21, Kruse 49) Att: 32,500

SCHALKE 2 (Max 50, Anderbrugge 84)
WERDER BREMEN 1 (Baiano 80) Att: 29,500

1860 MUNICH 4 (Lesniak 32, Bodden 40, Winkler 73, Greilich 76)
BORUSSIA MG 0 Att: 29,000

KOLN 3 (Kohn 45, Polster 73, 90)
HANSA ROSTOCK 0 Att: 28,000

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Borussia Dortmund	17	12	4	1	44	20	40
Bayern Munich	17	12	2	3	36	18	38
VfB Stuttgart	17	7	7	3	38	31	28
Borussia MG	17	9	1	7	28	31	28
Hamburg	17	6	8	3	29	23	26
Bayer Leverkusen	17	6	7	4	22	15	25
Hansa Rostock	17	6	7	4	28	22	25
Schalke	17	6	7	4	21	23	25
St Pauli	17	5	5	7	27	29	20
Eintracht Frankfurt	17	5	5	7	29	33	20
1860 Munich	17	4	6	7	22	26	18
Karlsruhe	17	4	6	7	23	29	18
Koln	17	3	8	6	18	22	17
Kaiserslautern	17	3	8	6	18	24	17
Werder Bremen	17	3	8	6	17	23	17
SC Freiburg	17	4	4	9	12	23	16
KFC Uerdingen	17	2	8	7	15	22	14
Fortuna Dusseldorf	17	2	7	8	16	29	13

HOLLAND

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

WEEKEND

RODA JC 1 (Doomernik 3)
FORTUNA SITTARD 1 (Burke 85) Att: 8,000

PSV 1 (Nilis 10)
SPARTA 2 (V.d.Laan 33, De Nooijer 67) Att: 24,500

DE GRAAFSCHAP 3 (Meijer 19, 43, Van de Brink 50)
UTRECHT 0 Att: 6,100

GRONINGEN 0
NEC 0 Att: 11,002

RKC 1 (Schreuder 21)
GA EAGLES 1 (Michels 32) Att: 2,200

TWENTE 1 (Ellerman 56)
VITESSE 0 Att: 5,400

VOLENDAM 1 (Ferrier 5)
HEERENVEEN 1 (Hansma 64) Att: 3,500

FEYENOORD v NAC – *postponed*

WILLEM II v AJAX – *postponed*

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

WEEKEND

HEERENVEEN 0
FEYENOORD 1 (Trustfull 44) Att: 13,400

FORTUNA 0
RKC 0 Att: 4,000

NEC 1 (Sumiala 60)
WILLEM II 1 (Van der Vegt 10) Att: 2,400

SPARTA 1 (De Nooijer 54)
GRONINGEN 1 (Gorre 80) Att: 4,000

UTRECHT 0
TWENTE 3 (Hoogma 36, Bosvelt 71, 79) Att: 5,995

VITESSE 2 (Gorter 19, Makaay 45)
VOLENDAM 1 (Bocciek 17) Att: 5,223

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

WEEKEND

PSV 3 (Hoekstra 61, 84, Numan 88)
FORTUNA 0 Att: 24,000

SPARTA 1 (De Nooijer 85)
WILLEM II 1 (Van de Berg 77) Att: 3,450

GRONINGEN 0
GA EAGLES 0 Att: 7,800

HEERENVEEN 3 (Talan 5, Regtop 52, Wouden 79)
RODA JC 2 (Babangida 14, Van Hoogdalem 65) Att: 13,100

NAC 0
RKC 1 (Streppel 89) Att: 9,000

VITESSE 0
FEYENOORD 2 (Koeman 10, Bosz 90) Att: 9,300

TWENTE 2 (Bruggink 70, Efferman 89)
VOLENDAM 1 (Bociek 51) Att: 5,300

UTRECHT 0
AJAX 3 (Overmars 10, Litmanen 25 pen, 38) Att: 14,000

NEC 1 (Janssen 40 pen)
DE GRAAFSCHAP 1 (Meyer 62) Att: 2,450

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ajax	18	17	1	0	62	6	52
PSV Eindhoven	18	14	2	2	61	11	44
Heerenveen	19	8	8	3	32	29	32
Feyenoord	18	9	4	5	38	26	31
Willem II	18	7	8	3	38	22	29
Sparta Rotterdam	19	8	5	6	28	32	29
Roda JC	19	6	8	5	20	21	26
Vitesse Arnhem	19	7	5	7	28	31	26
FC Twente	19	7	5	7	26	29	26
NAC Breda	17	6	7	4	26	14	25
RKC Waalwijk	19	7	4	8	23	27	25
FC Groningen	19	6	7	6	25	30	25
Fortuna Sittard	19	4	6	9	14	34	18
FC Volendam	18	3	5	10	16	37	14
De Graafschap	19	3	5	11	23	42	14
NEC Nijmegen	19	3	5	11	18	46	14
GA Eagles	19	2	6	11	22	40	12
FC Utrecht	18	2	5	11	14	37	11

ITALY

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

MIDWEEK

ITALIAN CUP – QUARTER-FINAL,1ST LEG

BOLOGNA 1 MILAN 1

CAGLIARI 1 ATALANTA 0

FIORENTINA 1 PALERMO 0

INTERNAZIONALE1 LAZIO 1

WEEKEND

ATALANTA 3 (Tovalieri 9, 31, Morfeo 57)
VICENZA 1 (Murgita 25) Att: 18,841

BARI 1 (Protti 47 pen)
SAMPDORIA 3 (Chiesa 27, 36, 77) Att: 34,090

INTER 2 (Zanetti 18, Ganz 43)
CREMONESE 0 Att: 37,704

JUVENTUS 5 (Vialli 3, 26, 42,Ferrara 47, Ravanelli 66 pen)
TORINO 0 Att: 29,352

LAZIO 0
MILAN 1 (Weah 86) Att: 61,800

NAPOLI 1 (Pizzi 38)
PARMA 1 (Zola pen 52) Att: 38,425

PADOVA 0
FIORENTINA 1 (Batistuta 90) Att: 15,069

PIACENZA 1 (Caccia 53)
CAGLIARI 1 (Oliveira 57) Att: 10,690

UDINESE 1 (Bierhoff 64)
AS ROMA 1 (Balbo 89) Att: 13,925

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

WEEKEND

CAGLIARI 2 (Boselli og 59, Muzzi 71)
ATALANTA 0 Att: 16,266

CREMONESE 7 (Brioschi og 8, Gualco 26, Florjancic 39, Perovic 42, Aloisi 45, Perovic 60, Tentoni 74)
BARI 1 (Andersson 22) Att: 5,693

FIORENTINA 3 (Baiano 18, Batistuta pen 51, 90)
UDINESE 0 Att: 35,458

MILAN 0
NAPOLI 0 Att: 52,838

PADOVA 2 (Vlaovic 16, 48)
INTER 1 (Ganz 43) Att: 18,947

PARMA 2 (Asprilla 37, Zola 48)
LAZIO 1 (Di Matteo 90) Att: 24,478

AS ROMA 1 (Lopez og 21)
VICENZA 1 (Viviani 41) Att: 50,727

SAMPDORIA 2 (Chiesa 41, 52)
JUVENTUS 0 Att: 37,709

TORINO 4 (Rizzitelli pen 32, 45, Pele 77, Bernardini 84 og)
PIACENZA 2 (Caccia 60, Bernardini 84) Att: 16,773

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

MIDWEEK

ITALIAN CUP – QUARTER-FINALS, 2ND LEG

LAZIO 0
INTER 1 (Berti 77) Att: 24,515
Inter won 2-1 on agg

PALERMO 1 (Scarafoni 73 pen)
FIORENTINA 2 (Baiano 32, Rui Costa 57) Att: 28,705
Fiorentina won 3-1 on agg

MILAN 1 (Savicevic 90 pen)
BOLOGNA 1 (Baresi 77 og) Att: 5,462
Agg: 2-2, Bologna won on pens

ATALANTA 4 (Tovalieri 19,83, Morfea 25, Pisani 80)
CAGLIARI 2 (Bressan 47, Silva 78) Att: 12,000
Atalanta won 4-3 on agg

WEEKEND

MILAN 1 (Boban 11)
TORINO 1 (Rizzitelli 6 pen) Att: 45,000

FIORENTINA 3 (Baiano 38, Batistuta 59, 72)
ATALANTA 1 (Morfeo 70) Att: 21,000

BARI 1 (Protti 45 pen)
PARMA 1 (Melli 88) Att: 23,000

JUVENTUS 1 (Vialli 30)
INTER 0 Att: 44,000

LAZIO 6 (Signori 18, 40 pen, Boksic 46, Winter 57, Casiraghi 66, Fuser 70)
SAMPDORIA 3 (Mihajlovic 38, Chiesa 65, 76 pen) Att: 45,000

NAPOLI 0
AS ROMA 2 (Thern 12, Delvecchio 70) Att: 45,000

VICENZA 0
CAGLIARI 1 (Oliveira 60) Att: 14,000

UDINESE 3 (Bierhoff 3, Ametrano 72, Poggi 85)
PADOVA 1 (Vlaovic 46) Att: 13,000

PIACENZA 2 (Caccia 19, Piovani 46)
CREMONESE 1 (A. Tentoni 88) Att: 11,000

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Milan	15	8	6	1	23	12	30
Fiorentina	15	9	2	4	26	16	29
Parma	15	7	6	2	21	14	27
Lazio	15	7	4	4	30	17	25
Juventus	15	7	3	5	22	15	24
AS Roma	15	6	6	3	18	11	24
Atalanta	15	6	4	5	19	23	22
Internazionale	15	5	6	4	19	11	21
Sampdoria	15	5	6	4	24	21	21
Vicenza	15	5	5	5	13	13	20
Cagliari	15	6	2	7	13	19	20
Napoli	14	4	8	3	14	14	20
Udinese	15	5	4	6	16	18	19
Piacenza	15	4	4	7	17	29	16
Torino	15	3	6	6	14	23	15
Bari	15	3	3	9	20	35	12
Cremonese	15	2	4	9	18	24	10
Padova	15	2	3	10	14	26	9

PORTUGAL

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

WEEKEND

PORTUGUESE CUP – 4TH RND

ANADIA 2 BOAVISTA 8

BELENENSES 2 SPORTING BRAGA 1

CAMPOMAIORENSE 1 NACIONAL 0

CHAVES 1 SPORTING LISBON 3

ESTRELA AMADORA 2 MARITIMO 3

FARENSE 3 VARZIM SC 2

GIL VICENTE 0 ESTORIL PRAIA 2

LECA 3 NAVAL LE DE MAIO 2

PACOS FERREIRA 1 GUIMARAES 4

FC PORTO 6 AMORA FC 0

TIRSENSE 0 BENFICA 2

UNIAO LEIRIA 3 SALGUEIROS 1

LUSITANIA FC 1 FELGUEIRAS 1 *(aet)*

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

WEEKEND

BELENENSES 0
SPORTING LISBON 1 (Sa Pinto 60)

BENFICA 2 (Edgar 68, Marcelo Cipriano 86)
CAMPOMAIORENSE 0

ESTRELA AMADORA 3 (Birame 55, Jose Carlos 70, Marquinhos 89)
GIL VICENTE 1 (Beto 43)

FELGUEIRAS 3 (Amaral 45, Lewis 73, Sergio Conceicao 81)
FARENSE 1 (Carlos Costa 66)

MARITIMO 2 (Carlos Jorge 11, Alex 67)
BOAVISTA 0

SALGUEIROS 0
FC PORTO 4 (Domingos 28, Lipcsei 30, Edmilsson 59, 76)

TIRSENSE 1 (Daoudi 16)
LECA 3 (Paulinho 61, Constantino 69, Miguel Barros 77)

UNIAO LEIRIA 1 (Mauricio 20)
SPORTING BRAGA 0

GUIMARAES 2 (Edinho 20, Paneira 34)
CHAVES 1 (Paulo Alexandre 90)

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

WEEKEND

FARENSE 3 BENFICA 1

CAMPOMAIORENSE 4 UNIAO LEIRIA 2

SPORTING BRAGA 1 MARITIMO 1

BOAVISTA 1 SALGUEIROS 1

FC PORTO 5 TIRSENSE 0

SPORTING LISBON 4 FELGUEIRAS 0

LECA 1 GUIMARAES 0

GIL VICENTE 0 BELENENSES 0

CHAVES 0 ESTRELA AMADORA 0

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, 31

WEEKEND

BENFICA 4 (Marinho 13, Joao Pinto 61, Ricardo 75, Panduru 79)
UNIAO LEIRIA 0

FC PORTO 6 (Domingos 29, Latapy 33, Liposei 42, 86, Jorge Costa 61, Edmilson 68)
ESTRELA AMADORA 0

CAMPOMAIORENSE 0
SALGUEIROS 0

LECA 0
BELENENSES 5 (Paulo Madeira 10, Fertout 60, 65, Tulipa 70, Cesar Brito 73 pen)

BRAGA 4 (Karoglan 1, 25, Sergio 10, Rodlund 19)
TIRSENSE 0

FARENSE 2 (Idalecio 5, Hajry 88)
MARITIMO 0

CHAVES 1 (Miner 60 pen)
SPORTING 1 (Carlos Xavier 86)
Match abandoned due to electricity failure 2 minutes from the end.

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Porto	16	14	2	0	44	2	44
Sporting Lisbon	15	11	3	1	37	11	36
Benfica	16	11	3	2	26	12	36
Boavista	16	10	3

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

MIDWEEK

MOTHERWELL 0
RANGERS 0 Att: 10,197

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31

MIDWEEK

FALKIRK v ABERDEEN – *postponed*
RAITH ROVERS v CELTIC – *postponed*
HEARTS v MOTHERWELL – *postponed*
PARTICK v HIBERNIAN – *postponed*
RANGERS 3 (Salenko 24, Durie 45 pen, Gascoigne 90)
KILMARNOCK 0 Att: 45,173

WEEKEND

KILMARNOCK v ABERDEEN – *postponed*
HEARTS v CELTIC – *postponed*
FALKIRK v MOTHERWELL – *postponed*
RANGERS 7 (Miller 30, Durie 40, 52, 77, 86, Gascoigne 76, Salenko 83)
HIBERNIAN 0 Att: 44,692
RAITH ROVERS v PARTICK – *postponed*

SCOTLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	21	15	5	1	47	10	50
Celtic	19	12	6	1	35	15	42
Hibernian	20	9	4	7	30	35	31
Aberdeen	18	8	2	8	28	22	26
Raith	18	7	4	7	22	25	25
Hearts	19	6	4	9	26	34	22
Kilmarnock	19	5	3	11	23	33	18
Partick	18	4	4	10	13	29	16
Motherwell	18	2	9	7	13	20	15
Falkirk	18	4	3	11	14	28	15

SPAIN

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

WEEKEND

BARCELONA 1 (Kodro 20)
RACING SANTANDER 1 (Chema 42)
Att: 80,000

RAYO VALLECANO 1 (Aquino 17)
ESPANYOL 0 Att: 4,000

REAL MADRID 4 (Alkorta 2, Alvaro 14, Raul 21, 57)
SEVILLA 1 (Moya 49) Att: 55,000

ATH. BILBAO 2 (Etxeberria 3, Andrinua 72)
VALLADOLID 1 (Peternac 12) Att: 35,000

COMPOSTELA 3 (Christensen 16, Ohen 22, 60)
ALBACETE 1 (Kasumov 80) Att: 9,000

MERIDA 0
LA CORUNA 2 (Aldana 7, Manjarin 52)
Att: 13,500

SEVILLA 2 (Jarni 28, Pier 38)
ATLETICO MADRID 1 (Penev pen 32)
Att: 40,000

REAL OVIEDO 1 (Bango og 89)
SPORTING GIJON 0 Att: 18,683

REAL ZARAGOZA 0
CELTA VIGO 0 Att: 20,000

SALAMANCA 1 (Del Solar 8)
TENERIFE 2 (Pizzi 31, 49) Att: 15,000

VALENCIA 0
REAL SOCIEDAD 1 (Idiakez 59) Att: 45,000

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

WEEKEND

ATLETICO MADRID 3 (Penev pen 3, 12, Caminero 81)
BARCELONA 1 (Toni 87) Att: 60,000

RACING SANTANDER 0
VALENCIA 3 (Mijatovic 5, 65, Fernando 24)
Att: 16,000

ALBACETE 3 (Bjelica 14, Zalazar 83, Escaich 90)
SALAMANCA 3 (Stinga 2, Del Solar 56, Claudio 73) Att: 14,000

CELTA VIGO 2 (Sanchez 15, Milojevic 86)
RAYO VALLECANO 0 Att: 19,000

LA CORUNA 2 (Bebeto pen 23, Manjarin 83)
REAL ZARAGOZA 3 (Pardeza 9, Morientes 19, Dani 77) Att: 25,000

ESPANYOL 3 (Francisco 17, Benitez 76, Lardin 82)
REAL MADRID 1 (Laudrup 84) Att: 40,000

REAL SOCIEDAD 0
COMPOSTELA 1 (Ohen 9) Att: 16,000

REAL VALLADOLID 1 (Quevedo 34)
MERIDA 1 (Prieto 40) Att: 15,000

SEVILLA 1 (Jelicic 73)
REAL OVIEDO 1 (Oli 15) Att: 33,250

GIJON 2 (Hugo Perez 27, Bango 82)
REAL BETIS 3 (Jarni pen 48, 58, Canas 78)
Att: 17,300

TENERIFE 3 (Juanele 8, Pizzi pen 11, Pinilla 49)
ATHLETIC BILBAO 2 (Larrazabal 32, Oscar Vales 85) Att: 15,000

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

MIDWEEK

SPANISH CUP – 4TH RND, 2ND LEG

ATH. BILBAO 3 SALAMANÇA 1 *(agg: 3-1)*
CELTA VIGO 2 ANDORRA 0 *(agg: 7-0)*
ESPANYOL 5 LEGANES 1 *(agg: 6-1)*
MERIDA 4 ATLETICO MADRID 4 *(agg: 5-8)*
SANTANDER 0 NUMANCIA 1 *(agg: 0-1)*
VALLECANO 0 HERCULES 1 *(agg: 1-2)*
VALLADOLID 1 COMPOSTELA 1 *(agg: 1-2)*
SPORTING GIJON 5 ECIJA 0 *(agg: 5-2)*
TENERIFE 6 LEVANTE 1 *(agg: 6-2)*
VALENCIA 1 REAL OVIEDO *(agg: 2-1)*

WEEKEND

BARCELONA 1 (Popescu 7)
SPORTING GIJON 0 Att: 60,000

REAL BETIS 1 (Pier 59)
SEVILLA 1 (Monchu 53) Att: 40,000

ATHLETIC BILBAO 1 (Larrazabal pen 84)
MERIDA 1 (Sinval 62) Att: 30,000

COMPOSTELA 2 (Villena 88, Ohen 90)
RACING SANTANDER 0 Att: 8,500

RAYO VALLECANO 0
LA CORUNA 6 (Donato 15, Aldana 17, Alfredo 24, Bebeto 47, Manjarin 68, Lopez Rekarte 86)
Att: 10,000

REAL OVIEDO 1 (Carlos 45)
ESPANYOL 2 (Raducioiu pen 28, Bogdanovic 84) Att: 17,500

REAL MADRID 1 (Alvaro 30)
CELTA VIGO 0 Att: 50,000

REAL ZARAGOZA 5 (Ivan Campo og 16, Rambert pen 35, 42, Poyet 69, 90)
REAL VALLADOLID 3 (Peternac 44, Quevedo 55, Benjamin 85) Att: 22,000

SALAMANCA 3 (Barabara 12, Torrecilla 19, Stinga 31)
REAL SOCIEDAD 3 (Karpin 18, 59, De Paula 69) Att: 16,000

TENERIFE 1 (Pinilla 22)
ALBACETE 3 (Bjelica 27, 61, Mario 90)
Att: 13,000

VALENCIA 0
AT. MADRID 1 (Caminero 87) Att: 45,000

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

MIDWEEK

ALBACETE 2 (Zalazar 50, Luna 55)
ATHELTIC BILBAO 0 At: 14,000

ATLETICO MADRID 3 (Penev 21, Simeone 80, Roberto 82)
COMPOSTELA 0 Att: 40,000

CELTA VIGO 1 (Gudelj 89)
REAL OVIEDO 0 Att: 18,000

ESPANYOL 1 (Francisco 40)
REAL BETIS 1 (Pier 64) Att: 30,000

MERIDA 1 (Prieto 20)
REAL ZARAGOZA 1 (Oscar 52) Att: 11,000

SANTANDER 2 (Mutiu 7, Suances 46)
SALAMANCA 1 (Claudio 4) Att: 14,000

REAL SOCIEDAD 0
TENERIFE 1 (Aguilera 54) Att: 19,000

REAL VALLADOLID 1 (Fernando 86)
RAYO VALLECANO 1 (Onesimo 60)
Att: 10,000

SEVILLA 1 (Monchu 37)
BARCELONA 0 Att: 36,937

SPORTING GIJON 1 (Yekini 73)
VALENCIA 3 (Mijatovic 41, 75, Viola 85)
Att: 18,800

LA CORUNA 3 (Bebeto 13, 42, 43)
REAL MADRID 0 Att: 25,000

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Atletico Madrid	19	14	3	2	35	8	45
Espanyol	18	11	5	2	27	11	38
Compostela	19	11	3	5	26	21	36
Barcelona	18	10	5	3	37	16	35
Valencia	19	10	3	6	31	24	33
Real Madrid	19	9	4	6	33	25	31
Real Betis	19	7	9	3	28	23	30
La Coruna	19	9	3	7	33	17	29
Tenerife	19	7	8	4	29	30	29
Athletic Bilbao	19	7	5	7	23	23	26
Celta Vigo	19	6	6	7	20	21	24
Real Zaragoza	19	6	5	8	17	24	23
Real Sociedad	19	6	4	9	26	32	22
Sevilla	19	5	7	7	19	27	22
Sporting Gijon	19	6	2	11	23	25	20
Real Oviedo	19	5	5	9	19	29	20
Racing Santander	19	5	5	9	17	32	20
Albacete	19	5	4	10	26	37	19
Salamanca	19	4	6	9	25	31	18
Rayo Vallecano	19	5	3	11	20	35	18
Merida	19	3	8	8	15	26	17
Real Valladolid	19	2	7	10	22	34	13

SWITZERLAND

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

WEEKEND

AARAU 3 (Allenspach 45, Ratinho 51, Pavlicevic 77)
LAUSANNE 0 Att: 4,900

BASEL 0
ST GALLEN 0 Att: 13,500

NEUCHATEL XAMAX 2 (Isabella 16, 80)
GRASSHOPPER 1 (Subiat 19) Att: 14,200

SERVETTE 1 (Neuville 83)
LUCERNE 0 Att: 8,300

SION 1 (Bonvin 83)
YOUNG BOYS 0 Att: 4,000

FC ZURICH 1 (Castillo 45)
LUGANO 2 (Erceg 4, Colombo 89) Att: 1,900

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

WEEKEND

GRASSHOPPER 1 (M. Yakin 47)
BASEL 3 (Rey 7, 36, Vega og 43) Att: 11,200

LAUSANNE 0
SERVETTE 2 (Barberis 63, Sogbie 87)
Att: 2,200

LUCERNE 3 (Aleksandrov 42, 85, T. Wyss pen 61)
SION 2 (Herr 16, Vercruysse 66) Att: 10,600

ST GALLEN 0
AARAU 0 Att: 12,000

YOUNG BOYS 2 (Gianinazzi 55, Neqrouz 82
FC ZURICH 0 Att: 1,350

SWITZERLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Grasshopper	22	13	4	5	38	22	43
Sion	22	13	3	6	37	28	42
Neuchatel Xamax	22	12	5	5	40	24	41
Lucerne	22	11	7	4	36	25	40
Basel	22	9	3	10	23	29	30
Servette	22	7	7	8	28	28	28
Aarau	22	7	6	9	36	27	27
St Gallen	22	6	9	7	26	24	27
Lausanne	22	6	9	7	25	25	27
Lugano	22	5	6	11	21	42	21
Zurich	22	4	6	12	17	32	18
Young Boys	22	4	5	13	14	35	17

Top eight teams will play a round robin championship, taking half of points earned during the qualifying phase.
Bottom four will play a round robin relegation round along with four best B division teams: Kriens, Delmont, Etoile Carouge and Yverdon.

EURO TABLES

ALBANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Teuta	17	11	4	2	27	11	29
Tirana	17	9	5	3	23	12	27
Besa	17	9	4	4	18	9	24
Olimpik	17	9	3	5	24	13	23
Partizani	17	8	3	6	22	16	22
Flamurtari	17	8	3	6	20	15	21
Apolonia	17	6	5	6	25	21	18
Shqiponja	17	6	3	8	17	18	17
Albpetrol	17	6	4	7	16	19	17
Sopoti	17	6	4	7	15	18	17
Vilaznia	17	5	6	6	14	17	17
Tomorri	17	5	6	6	16	17	16
Kastrioti	17	5	4	8	16	22	15
Shkumbini	17	4	6	7	14	20	14
Elbasani	17	4	5	8	12	21	14
Beslidhja	17	4	6	7	8	19	14
Laci	17	5	3	9	21	30	13
Skenderbeu	17	5	2	10	16	30	12

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Panathinaikos	14	11	2	1	28	7	35
AEK Athens	14	11	1	2	41	11	34
Olympiakos	14	9	4	1	31	12	31
OFI Crete	14	8	2	4	32	24	26
Paniliakos	14	6	3	5	23	20	21
Heraklis	14	6	3	5	20	21	21
Ionikos	14	5	4	5	21	22	19
Skoda-Xanthi	14	5	4	5	18	21	19
Edessaikos	14	5	4	5	21	24	19
Kalamata	14	4	5	5	21	26	17
Apollon	14	4	4	6	19	20	16
Aris Salonika	14	4	4	6	17	18	16
Panahaiki	14	5	1	8	15	26	16
PAOK Salonika	14	4	6	4	16	17	15
Panionios	14	4	3	7	20	23	15
Athinaikos	14	4	2	8	12	22	14
Larissa	14	2	2	10	10	30	8
Ethnikos	14	1	2	11	11	32	5

PAOK deducted 3pts

LUXEMBOURG

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CS Grevenmacher	11	8	2	1	23	12	26
Jeunesse Esch	11	7	2	2	25	12	23
Union Luxembourg	11	5	4	2	28	11	19
F91 Dudelange	10	5	3	2	21	10	18
Rodange	11	6	0	5	11	13	18
Sporting Mertzig	10	5	2	3	14	9	17
Spora Luxembourg	11	3	4	4	15	17	13
Avenir Beggen	11	3	2	6	19	25	11
Aris Bonnevoie	11	2	4	5	18	21	10
FC Wiltz	11	3	1	7	11	20	10
CS Petange	11	3	0	8	12	27	9
Red Boys	11	2	2	7	14	34	8

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Trabzonspor	17	14	2	1	43	12	44
Fenerbahce	17	13	3	1	35	12	42
Besiktas	17	11	3	3	42	20	36
Galatasaray	17	11	2	4	34	20	35
Kocaelispor	17	6	7	4	24	22	25
Genclerbirligi	17	6	7	4	26	25	25
Antalyaspor	17	7	4	6	27	29	25
Gaziantepspor	17	6	6	5	21	16	24
Bursaspor	17	5	6	6	33	28	21
Ankaragucu	17	6	3	8	21	30	21
Samsunspor	17	6	2	9	23	22	20
Altay	17	6	2	9	18	32	20
Karsiyaka	17	5	3	9	15	34	18
Denizlispor	17	3	7	7	17	27	16
Eskisehirspor	17	4	1	12	23	33	13
Istanbulspor	17	3	4	10	21	31	13
Vanspor	17	3	4	10	11	27	13
Kayserispor	17	2	6	9	17	31	12

NORTHERN IRELAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portadown	13	8	3	2	30	14	27
Crusaders	14	8	2	4	23	16	26
Glenavon	13	7	2	4	23	12	23
Glentoran	14	6	4	4	28	20	22
Linfield	14	5	4	5	16	19	19
Cliftonville	14	2	5	5	12	24	12
Ards	13	2	5	6	14	21	11
Bangor	13	2	2	9	12	27	8

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
St Patricks's Ath	19	12	3	4	28	21	39
Bohemians	18	10	4	4	45	15	34
Shelbourne	19	8	8	3	25	14	32
Sligo Rovers	18	9	5	4	23	16	32
Dundalk	18	9	4	5	25	19	31
Derry City	18	6	6	6	30	26	24
Cork City	18	7	5	6	21	21	23
Shamrock Rovers	18	6	5	7	14	18	23
Drogheda Utd	19	5	6	8	21	27	21
UCD	19	5	4	10	17	23	19
Galway United	19	3	6	10	20	35	15
Athlone Town	19	1	4	14	20	44	7

ISRAEL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Betar Jerusalem	15	11	3	1	36	14	36
Maccabi Tel Aviv	15	11	2	2	34	14	35
Hapoel Haifa	15	10	3	2	34	13	33
Maccabi Haifa	15	9	5	1	38	19	32
Mac. Petah Tikva	15	8	3	4	27	23	27
Maccabi Herzliya	15	7	2	6	16	15	23
Hapoel Petah Tikva	15	6	7	3	21	17	22
Hapoel Tel Aviv	15	6	4	5	17	18	22
Hapoel Beersheva	15	4	5	6	19	17	17
Ironi Rishon	15	4	2	9	13	20	14
Hapoel Kfar Sava	15	4	2	9	15	26	14
Bnei Yehuda	15	4	2	9	18	31	14
Hapoel Beit She'an	15	3	4	9	13	29	13
Betar Tel Aviv	15	3	3	9	18	34	12
Zafririm Holon	15	3	2	10	19	34	11
Maccabi Jaffa	15	3	1	11	13	30	10

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – 1995-96

DECEMBER 6 - *MATCHDAY 6*

GROUP A

AALBORG BK 2 (Andersen 11, Madsen 69)
FC PORTO 2 (Emerson 63, 75)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 3,950. **Ref:** Craciunescu (Rom).
Aalborg: Winde - Kruger, Madsen (Pedersen 82), Kristensen, Jessen, Facius, Thomasberg, Thomsen, E B Andersen, Gronkjaer (Helledie Nielsen 79), P Rasmussen (Hjermitslev 65).
Porto: Vitor Baia - Joao Pinto (Rui Barros 52), Rui Jorge, Aloisio, Jose Carlos (Joao Manuel Pinto 74), Emerson, Secretario, Edmilson, Domingos, Paulinho Santos, Drulovic.

NANTES 0
PANATHINAIKOS 0
Att: 30,000. **Ref:** Sundell (Swe).
Nantes: Casagrande - Chanelet, Le Dizet, Decroix, Guyot, Ferri, Makelele, Pedros, Ouedec, N'Doram, Kosecki (Renou 85).
Panathinaikos: Wandzik - Apostolakis, Ouzounidis, Christopoulou, Kolitsidakis, Markos, Borelli (Gournas 89), G S Georgiadis, Lagonikakis, Marangos, Kapouranis.

FINAL TABLE

PANATHINAIKOS	6	3	2	1	7	3	11
NANTES	6	2	3	1	8	6	9
FC Porto	6	1	4	1	6	5	7
Aalborg	6	1	1	4	5	12	4

GROUP B

BLACKBURN ROVERS 4 (Shearer 16pen, Newell 31, 37, 40)
ROSENBORG BK 1 (Iversen 30)
HT: 4-1. **Att:** 20,677. **Ref:** Pauchard (Fra).
Blackburn: Flowers - Berg, Kenna, Sherwood, Marker, Sutton, Ripley, Warhurst*, Shearer, Newell, Holmes (Gallacher 73).
* = *Warhurst sent off, 51min.*

Rosenborg: By Rise - Kvarme, Hoftun, Bragstad (Heggem 45), Stensaas, Strand (Staurvik 46), Soltvedt, Skammelsrud, Iversen, Brattbakk, Jakobsen.

LEGIA WARSAW 0
MOSCOW SPARTAK 1 (Mamedov 40)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Mottram (Sco).
Legia: Szczesny - Mandziejewicz, Jozwiak, Bednarz, Zielinski, Lewandowski, Pisz, Michalski, Podbrozny, Kucharski, Staniek, (Wieszczycki 82).
Spartak: Cherchesov - Khlestov, Nikiforov, Tsymbalar, Mamedov, Kechinov, Onopko (Ananko 82), Kulkov, Shmarov, Alenichev, Tikhonov.

FINAL TABLE

MOSCOW SPARTAK	6	6	0	0	15	4	18
LEGIA WARSAW	6	2	1	3	5	8	7
Rosenborg	6	2	0	4	11	16	6
Blackburn Rovers	6	1	1	4	5	8	4

GROUP C

BORUSSIA DORTMUND 2 (Moller 17, Riedle 48)
RANGERS 2 (B Laudrup 10, Durie 84)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 35,800. **Ref:** Diaz Vega (Spa).
Dortmund: Klos - Franck, Freund, Kree, Wolters, Zorc, Moller, Berger, Reinhardt (Sosa 82), Herrlich, Riedle (Kutowski 64).
Rangers: Goram - McLaren, Gough, Bollan, Robertson, Cleland (Durrant 78), Miller (McCoist 82), Gascoigne*, McCall, B Laudrup, Durie.
* = *Gascoigne sent off, 75min.*

STEAUA BUCHAREST 0
JUVENTUS 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 2,500. **Ref:** Grabher (Aus).
Steaua: Stelea - Panait, Pirvu (D L Rosu 46), Dobos, Gilca, Prodan, Nagy, Csik, Militaru (S Ilie 83), Vladoiu, Filipescu (Raducan 63).
Juventus: Rampulla - Porrini, Torricelli, Ferrara, Carrera, Pessotto, Conte, Jugovic, Deschamps, Marocchi (Lombardo 66), Ravanelli (Del Piero 46).

FINAL TABLE

JUVENTUS	6	4	1	1	15	4	13
BOR. DORTMUND	6	2	3	1	8	8	9
Steaua Bucharest	6	1	3	2	2	5	6
Rangers	6	0	3	3	6	14	3

GROUP D

AJAX (Overmars 17, R de Boer 22, Litmanen 62, 66)
FERENCVAROS 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 43,000. **Ref:** Koho (Fin).

Ajax: Van der Sar - Reiziger, Scholten, F de Boer, Bogarde, R de Boer, George (Wooter 77), Davids (Musampa 46), Kluivert, Litmanen (Reuser 77), Overmars.
Ferencvaros: Hajdu - Hrutka, Kusneycov, Keller, Szucs, Kuntics (Kopunovics 66), Paling (Z Nagy 90), Albert, Nyilas, Lisztes, O Vincze.

GRASSHOPPER 0
REAL MADRID 2 (Raul 55, Michel 67)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,100. **Ref:** McCluskey (Sco).
Grasshopper: Foletti - Gaemperle, Gren, Vega, Geiger, Koller, Lombardo, Haas, Comisetti (Semeter 75), Subiat (Magnin 67), Ali Ibrahim (De Napoli 82).
Real Madrid: Buyo - Quique Flores, Hierro (Alkorta 62), Sanchis, Lasa, Luis Enrique, Milla, M Laudrup (Rincon 69), Amavisca (Michel 62), Raul, Esnaider.

FINAL TABLE

AJAX	6	5	1	0	15	1	16
REAL MADRID	6	3	1	2	11	5	10
Ferencvaros	6	1	2	3	9	19	5
Grasshopper	6	0	2	4	3	13	2

QUARTER-FINALS

LEGIA WARSAW v PANATHINAIKOS
NANTES v SPARTAK MOSCOW
REAL MADRID v JUVENTUS
BORUSSIA DORTMUND v AJAX

1st leg: March 6, 2nd leg: March 20

TOP SCORERS

1	Litmanen (Ajax)	6
2	Del Piero (Juventus)	5
	Raul (Real Madrid)	5
4	Kluivert (Ajax)	4
	Newell (Blackburn)	4
	Ravanelli (Juventus)	4
	Zamorano (Real Madrid)	4
8	Andersen (Aalborg)	3
	Loken (Rosenborg)	3
	Nikiforov (Spartak)	3
	Yuran (Spartak)	3
	Pedros (Nantes)	3
	Warzycha (Panathinaikos)	3

1995-96 UEFA CUP

3RD ROUND, 2ND LEG
(December 5, unless stated)

BARCELONA 3 (Bakero 61, Popescu 80, Roger Garcia 82)
SEVILLA 1 (Moya 81)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 80,000
Barcelona 4-2 on agg

Barcelona: Lopetegui - Ferrer, Nadal, Popescu, Sergi, Guardiola, Bakero, Roger Garcia, Hagi, Figo (Toni 81), Oscar Garcia (Albert Celades 65).
Sevilla: Unzue - Martagon, Jimenez, Prieto*, Diego Rodriguez, Juanito Rodriguez (Tevenet 88), Pepelu Raimundo, Moya, Suker, Marcos de la Fuente, Carlitos Dominguez (Quique Estebaranz 86).
* = *Prieto sent off, 67min.*

REAL BETIS 2 (Alexis Trujillo 30, Vlada Stosic 45)
BORDEAUX 1 (Zinedine Zidane 3)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 36,000 *(Dec 6).*
Bordeaux 3-2 on agg

Betis: Jaro - Quesada (Arpon 52), Vidakovic, Merino (Marquez 85), Valdomino, Trujillo, Stosic, Canas (Menendez 85), Pier, Sabas, Jarni.
Bordeaux: Huard - Toyes, Prunier, Fernandez, Dogon, Croci, Zidane, Dutuel, Bancarel, Richard Witschge (Histilloles 70), Grenet.

BENFICA 1 (Valdo 13)
BAYERN MUNICH 3 (Klinsmann 33, 66, Herzog 83)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 17,000.
Bayern 7-2 on agg

Benfica: Brassard - Mario Costa, Ricardo Gomes, Helder, Pedro Henriques, Paulo Bento, Calado, Edgar, Hassan Nader, Valdo, Marcelo Cipriano.
Bayern: Kahn - Frey, Witeczek, Kreuzer, Helmer (Grill 87), Nerlinger, Scholl (Herzog 73), Sforza, Klinsmann, Matthaus (Kostadinov 55), Zickler.

LENS 0
SLAVIA PRAGUE 1 (Poborsky 95)
HT: 0-0. 90min: 0-0. **Att:** 35,000 *(Dec 7)*
Slavia 1-0 on agg

Lens: Warmuz - Sikora, Adjovi-Bocco, Magnier (Arsene 106), Foe, Wallemme, Camara, Laigle (Delmotte 46), Debeve (R Boli 106), Meyrieu, Vairelles.
Slavia: Stejskal - Kristofik (Wagner 94), Suchoparek, Bejbl, Hysky (Hunal 46), Novotny, Smicer, Penicka, Poborsky, Smejkal, Kozel.

LYON 0
NOTTINGHAM FOREST 0
Att: 38,500. **Ref:** M Van Der Ende (Hol)
Forest 1-0 on agg

Lyon: Olmeta - Sassus, Marcelo, Devaux, Moulin, Roy, Deplat, Rivenet (Roche 86), Maurice*, Giuly (Chaurondier 77), Bardon (Assadourian 77).
* = *Maurice sent off, 86min.*
Forest: Crossley - Lyttle, Pearce, Cooper, Chettle, Bart-Williams, Stone, Gemmill (Haaland 73), Lee (Silenzi 85), Howe, Woan.

AS ROMA 3 (Totti 23, Balbo 71, Carboni 89)
BRONDBY 1 (P Moller 84)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 46,000.
Roma 4-3 on agg

Roma: Cervone - Annoni, Lanna, Statuto, Aldair, Carboni, Moriero (Di Biagio 47), Cappioli, Balbo, Thern, Totti.
Brondby: Krogh - Bjur, Colding, Per Nielsen, Risager, Daugaard (Bagger 34), Thoerghesen, A R Jensen, P Moller, Sand, Vilfort.

SPARTA PRAGUE 0
MILAN 0
Att: 16,000 *(Dec 7)*
Milan 2-0 on agg

Sparta: Kouba - Repka, Mistr, Nedved, Hornak, Budka, Vonasek, Pozar, Lokvenc, Svoboda, Frydek (Koeller 76).
Milan: Ielpo - Panucci, Maldini, Ambrosini, Costacurta, Baresi, Eranio, Desailly, Weah, Boban (Locatelli 80), Di Canio (Donadoni 61).

WERDER BREMEN 0
PSV EINDHOVEN 0
Att: 25,077
PSV 2-1 on agg

Bremen: Rost - Wiedener, Junior Baiano, Hany Ramzy (Beiersdorfer 55), Borowka, Votava (Vier 81), Eilts, Cardoso, Bode, Basler, Neubarth.
PSV: Waterreus (Menzo 60) - Van der Weerden, Valckx, Faber, Numan, Vink (Hoekstra 66), Wouters, Jonk, Cocu, Ronaldo, Nilis (Eykelkamp 90).

INTERNATIONAL RESULTS

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26

Nov 26 - Kampala - East and Central African Chp Gp A

UGANDA 0
RWANDA 0

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27

Nov 27 - Nouakchott - Amilcar Cabral 3rd place play-off

CAPE VERDE ISLANDS 1
GUINEA BISSAU 0

Nov 27 - Kampala - East and Central African Chp Gp A

KENYA 2 (Lwanga 40, H Motego 61)
ZANZIBAR 0
HT: 1-0.

Nov 27 - Jinja - East and Central African Chp Gp B

ETHIOPIA 2 (Mulumba 15, G Masatu 89)
TANZANIA 2 (Missikir Zailalem 62, Tesfala Asedje 88)
HT: 1-0.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28

Nov 28 - Nouakchott - Amilcar Cabral Final

SIERRA LEONE 0
MAURITANIA 0
Att: 10,000.
Sierra Leone 4-3 on pens

Nov 28 - Libreville, Gabon - Tmt Belier d'Afrique

ALGERIA 4 (Messadi 13,50, Guechir 20, 31)
**CAMERO

INDEPENDIENTE TAKE SOUTH AMERICAN SUPERCUP . . . VELEZ SARSFIELD WIN ARGENTINIAN TITLE . . . . ORLANDO PIRATES CAPTURE AFRICAN CHAMPIONS CUP . . .

Nov 30 - Jinja - East and Central African Chp Gp B

ETHIOPIA 1
UGANDA B 0

Nov 30 - Libreville, Gabon - Tmt Belier d'Afrique

IVORY COAST 2 (Elo Lokpo 65, Aloka Saore 87)
CAMEROON 1 (Mahouve 55)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 6,000. **Ref:** Doumbou (Gab)

Nov 30 - Libreville, Gabon - Tmt Belier d'Afrique

GABON 2 (Nzamba 37, Makaya 48pen)
ALGERIA 1 (Dziri 34pen)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 16,000. **Ref:** K. Ndri (IC)

Nov 30 - Tunis - intl friendly

TUNISIA 3 (A Sellimi 51, B Aloui 66, Ben Slimane 68)
BURKINO FASO 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Dahou (Alg)

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1

Dec 1 - San Salvador - Central American Chp Gp A

COSTA RICA 2 (Fonseca 8, Wright 66)
BELIZE 1 (Macauley 27)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 1,319. **Ref:** Morales (Gua)

Dec 1 - Santa Ana, El Salvador - CentAm Cup Gp B

GUATEMALA 1 (Julio Rodas 21)
PANAMA 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 2,000. **Ref:** Mejias (CR)

Dec 1 - Jinja - East and Central African Chp Gp B

TANZANIA 7
SOMALIA 0

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2

Dec 2 - Libreville, Gabon - Belier d'Afrique 3rd place play-off

GABON 0
CAMEROON 0
Att: 15,000. **Ref:** Kouakou Ndri (IC)
Cameroon won 3-1 on pens

Dec 2 - Libreville, Gabon - Belier d'Afrique Final

IVORY COAST 0
ALGERIA 0
Att: 15,000. **Ref:** Diramba (Gab)
Ivory Coast won 3-1 on pens

Dec 2 - Kampala - East and Central African Chp Gp A

UGANDA 0
KENYA 0

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

Dec 3 - San Salvador - CentAm Cup Gp A

EL SALVADOR 2 (Rivera 62, Cienfuegos 81)
COSTA RICA 1 (Morales 32)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 33,715. **Ref:** Pedroza (Pan)

GROUP A

El Salvador	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Costa Rica	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Belize	2	0	0	2	1	5	0

Dec 3 - Santa Ana, El Salvador - CentAm Cup Gp B

HONDURAS 2 (Suazo 47, Nunez 89)
GUATEMALA 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 2,161. **Ref:** Bennett (Belize)

GROUP B

Honduras	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
Guatemala	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
Panama	2	0	0	2	0	3	0

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6

Dec 6 - Beirut - intl friendly

LEBANON 2 (Jamal Taha 50, Hassan Ayoub 85 pen)
SLOVAKIA 1 (Robert Siminic 36)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 10,000.

Dec 6 - Hermosillo - intl friendly

MEXICO 1 (Hernandez 4)
SLOVENIA 2 (Ceh 6, Siljak 18)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Sallas (Mex)
Mexico: Campos - Higareda, Suarez, Taboada (Moro), Ayala - Lopez (MacKenzie), Coyote, Hernandez - Luis Garcia, Alvez, Pelaez.
Slovenia: Boskovic - Krizan, Galic, Slatnik, Jermanis - Ceh, Novak, Zidan, Gajser - Siljak (Voncina), Valentincic.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7

Dec 7 - San Salvador - CentAm Cup semi-final

HONDURAS 1 (Williams 55)
COSTA RICA 1 (Fonseca 60)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 5,000.
Honduras 4-2 on pens

Dec 7 - San Salvador - CentAm Cup semi-final

EL SALVADOR 0
GUATEMALA 1 (Rodas 14)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 5,000.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9

Dec 9 - Bouake - intl friendly

IVORY COAST 2 (Gouamene 41, Elo Lokpo 77)
MALI 1 (S Coulibaly 1)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 8,000.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

Dec 10 - San Salvador - UNCAF Nations Cup Final

HONDURAS 3 (Nunez 1, Pavon 25, 57)
GUATEMALA 0
HT: 2-0.

Dec 10 - San Salvador - UNCAF Nations Cup third place play-off

EL SALVADOR 2 (Arce 18, Rodriguez 45)
COSTA RICA 1 (Fonseca 72)
HT: 2-0.
Honduras, Guatemala & El Salvador qualify for CONCACAF Gold Cup

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12

Dec 12 - Wembley - intl friendly

ENGLAND 1 (Stone 44)
PORTUGAL 1 (Alves 58)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 28,592. **Ref:** Pedersen (Nor)
England: Seaman – Neville, Pearce (Le Saux 79), Wise (Southgate 79), Adams, Howey, Barmby (McManaman 79), Gascoigne, Shearer, Ferdinand (Beardsley 68), Stone.
Portugal: Neno - Carlos Secretairo, Dimas, Costa, Couto, Sousa (Alves 46), Figo (Domingos 46), J Pinto (Dani 60), S Pinto, Helder, Folha (Barbosa 67).

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13

Dec 13 - Liverpool, Anfield - EC qualifying play-off

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND 0
HOLLAND 1 (Kluivert 30, 88)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Zhuk (Bye)
Rep Ireland: A Kelly - G Kelly, McGrath, Babb, Irwin, Kenna, Sheridan, Townsend (McAteer 50), Phelan, Aldridge (Kernaghan 71), Tony Cascarino.
Holland: Van der Sar - Reiziger, Blind, Bogarde, R De Boer, Seedorf, Davids, Overmars, Kluivert, Bergkamp (De Kock 57), Helder (Winter 78).

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15

Dec 15 - Johannesburg - intl friendly

SOUTH AFRICA 0
GERMANY 0
Att: 27,500.
S Africa: Arendse - Motaung, Nyathi, Tovey, Tucker - Tinkler, Buthelezi, Makalakalane (Moosa 76), Khumalo - Masinga (Mudau 82), Williams (Bartlett 64).
Germany: Kopke - Reuter, Kohler (Beinlich 76), Helmer, Schneider - Bode, Moller, Haber (Worns 62), Hassler - Klinsmann, Bobic.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20

Dec 20 - Manaus - intl friendly

BRAZIL 3 (Tulio 48, 87, Andre Luis 82)
COLOMBIA 1 (Pareja 32)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** De Freitas (Bra)
Brazil: Carlos Germano - Cafu, Celio Silva, Carlinhos (Alexandre Lopes 64), Andre Luis (Ze Roberto 72) - Flavio Conceicao, Amaral, Rivaldo, Arilson (Giovanni 84) - Tulio, Savio.
Colombia: Calero (Mondragon 46) - Gerson Gonzalez, Bermudez, Mendoza, Mosquera - Alvarez, Serna, Perez (Pareja 74), Rincon - Hernandez, Escobar.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21

Dec 21 - Mendoza - intl friendly

ARGENTINA 6 (Esnaider 2, 32, Lopez 18 pen, 28p en, Cardoso 24, Netto 82)
VENEZUELA 0
HT: 5-0. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Gamboa (Chile).
Argentina: Passet - Diaz, Ayala (Trotta 75), Sensini, Ramirez - Netto, Galetto, Lopez (Ortega 63), Cardoso - Esnaider, Biaggio (Delgado 77).
Venezuela: Angelucci - W Gonzalez (Jaime 32), Garcia, L Gonzalez, E Rodriguez (Hidalgo 74) - Balbuena, Hernandez, H Rodriguez, Diaz (Matthias 32) - Dolguetta, S Rivas.

SOUTH-EAST ASIAN GAMES

Group A: Vietnam 1 Indonesia 0; Thailand 3 Vietnam 1; Vietnam 2 Malaysia 0; Thailand 0 Malaysia 0; Indonesia 3 Malaysia 0.

Group B: Burma 1 Laos 0; Philippines 1 Brunei 0.

Semi-finals: Thailand 1 Singapore 0; Vietnam 2 Burma 1.

3rd place: Singapore 1 Burma 0.

Final: Thailand 4 Vietnam 0.

SUPER CUP

(for Libertadores Cup winners)

Semi-Finals, 2nd leg

NOV.22 - BUENOS AIRES

RIVER PLATE 0 (Arg) 0
INDEPENDIENTE (Arg) 0
Ref: J. Castrilli (Arg)
Agg 2-2, Independiente won 4-1 on pens
River Plate: Buros, Rivarola (56 Amato), C Ayala, Gomez, Altamirano, H Diaz (sent off 68), Astrada, Almeyda, Gallardo (68 Cedres), Ortega, Francescoli.
Independiente: Mondragon, Clausen (88 Burruchaga), Bustos, Kobistyj, Jara, Serrizuela, Dorta (46 Acuna), Domizzi, G. Lopez, Mazzoni, Alvez (46 Cagna).

NOV.23 - RIO DE JANEIRO

FLAMENGO (Bra) 3 (19 Aloisio, 39 Marcio Costa, 65 Rodrigo)
CRUZEIRO (Bra) 1 (45 Belletti)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** 0. Ruiz (Col).
Flamengo won 4-1 on agg
Flamengo: Paulo Cesar, Fabiano, Claudio, Ronaldao, Lira, Marcio Costa (Pingo), Djair, Marquinhos, Uesley, Nelio (Agnaldo), Aloisio (Rodrigo).

Cruzeiro: Dida, Paulo Roberto, Vanderci, Rogerio, Serginho (Alberto/Sotelo), Fabinho, Nonato, Belletti (Ademir), Roberto Gaucho, Marcelo, Paulinho.

Final, 1st leg

NOV. 29 - AVELLANEDA

INDEPENDIENTE (Arg) 2 (Manzoni 38, Domizzi 72)
FLAMENGO (Bra) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** S. Imperatore (Chile)
Independiente: Mondragon, Clausen, Rotchen, Bustos, Domizzi, Cagna (Acuna 79), Serrizuela, Molina, G. Lopez, Alvez (Burruchaga 63), Mazzoni.

Flamengo: Paulo Cesar,Fabiano, Claudio, Ronaldao, Lire, Djair, Marcio Costas, Marquinhos, Nelio (Uesley 77), Romario, Savio (Pingo 77).

Final, 2nd leg

DEC 6 - RIO DE JANEIRO

FLAMENGO (Bra) 1 (Romario 62)
INDEPENDIENTE (Arg) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** E. Gonzalez (Uru). **Att:** 105,000.
Independiente won 2-1 on agg
Flamengo: Paulo Cesar, Nelio (sent off 63), Claudio (Aloisio 46), Ronaldao, Lira, Marcio Costa, Marquinhos, Djair, Rodrigo (Uesley 76), Savio, Romario.
Independiente: Mondragon, Clausen, Rotchen, Bustos, Domiezzi (sent off 63), Molina, Serrizuela, Cagna, G. Lopez (Burruchaga 82), Alvez (Kobistyj 65), Mazzoni.

CONMEBOL CUP

QUARTER-FINALS - 1ST LEG

NOVEMBER 14

ATLETICO MINEIRO (Bra) 6 (Ezio, Jorge Luis, Reinaldo 3, Silva)
MINEROS DE GUYANA (Ven) 0.

QUARTER-FINALS - 2ND LEG

NOVEMBER 21

MINEROS DE GUYANA (Ven) 0
ATLETICO MINEIRO (Bra) 4 (Julio Cesar 3, Carlos)
Atletico Mineiro won 10-0 agg

NOVEMBER 22

COLEGIALES (Par) 1 (Gomez)
SUDAMERICA (Uru) 2 (Lujambio, Acevedo)
Agg. 2-2, Colegiales won 4-3 on pens

AMERICA (Col) 3 (Escobar 2, Perez)
CORINTHIANS (Bra) 1 (Clovis)
America won 4-3 agg

COBRELOA (Chi) 1 (Pino)
ROSARIO CENTRAL (Arg) 3 (Palma, Danielle, Da Silva)
Rosario Central won 5-1 on agg

SEMI-FINALS, 1ST LEG

NOVEMBER 30

COLEGIALES (Par) 0
ROSARIO CENTRAL (Arg) 2 (Coudet, Da Silva)

AMERICA (Col) 4 (Perez, Castillo, Escobar pen, De Avila)
ATLETICO MINEIRO (Bra) 3 (Ezio, Euller, Leandro).

SEMI-FINALS, 2ND LEG

DECEMBER 7

ROSARIO CENTRAL 3 (Carbonari, Cardetti, Coudet)
COLEGIALES 1 (Espinola)
Rosario Central won 5-1 agg

ATLETICO MINEIRO 1 (Leandro)
AMERICA 0
agg 4-4, Atletico Mineiro won 5-3 on pens

FINAL, 1ST LEG

ATLETICO MINEIRO (Bra) 4 (Ezio, Cairo, Paulo Rberto, Silva)
ROSARIO CENTRAL (Arg) 0.

CONCACAF CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

Final round (in San Jose, Costa Rica)

DECEMBER 13

DEP.SAPPRISA (CR) 5 (Gonzalez 26, Myers 39, Fonseca 69, Herrera 78, Morera 81)
MOULIEN (Guad) 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** J. Palak (US)
Saprissa: Lonnis, Quesada, Gonzalez, Salazar, Herrera (Herra), Wright, Morera, Mayorga, Myers, Wanchope (Sequeira), Fonseca, (Droumond).
Moulien: Maskatan, Folleville, Gradel, Mitel, Labiche (Larochelle), Selbonne, Pamphile (Choucoutou), Arconte, Mokongo, Jeunet, Marlin (Foucyn).

MUNICIPAL (Guat) 3 (Funes 2, Begui 9, Valencia 36)
ALAJUELENSE (CR) 2 (Delgado 28, Ledezma 32)

DECEMBER 15

ALAJUELENSE (CR) 9 (Ledezma 3, Montero 2, Mullins, Gomez, Badilla, Marin)
MOULIEN (Guad) 0
Ref: E. Ramirez (Hon)
Alajuelense: Rojas, Montero, Delgado, Marin, Wallace (Arnaez), Lopez (Berry), Gonzalez, Badilla, Gomez, Ledezma, Mullins (Munoz).
Moulien: Maskatan, Folleville, Gradel, Mitel, Labiche, Pamphile, Selbonne, Choucoutou (Arconte), Makongo, Sermansen (Larochelle), Marlin (Fostin).

DEPORTIVO SAPRISSA (CR) 1 (Wanchope)
MUNICIPAL (Guat) 0
Saprissa: Lonnis, Wright, Gonzalez, Salazar, Quesada, Diaz, Morera (Cordero), Mayorga (sent off), Myers (sent off). Fonseca (Droumond), Wanchope (Herrera).
Municipal: Chuga, Berta, Chinchilla, Hernandez, Funes, Salguero (Berdiquez), Begui, Mendez, Garcia, Plata, Valencia.

DECEMBER 17

DEPORTIVO SAPRISSA (CR) 2 (Fonseca 16, 20)

ALAJUELENSE (CR) 2 (Lopez 34, Arnaez 50)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** A. Rizzio (Mex).
Saprissa: Lonnis, Gonzalez, Diaz, Wright, Salazar, Quesada, Benneth (Cordero), Herrera, Morera, Fonseca, Wanchope (Sequeira).
Alajuelense: Rojas, Montero, Delgado, Marin, Wallace, Gonzalez (Arnaez), Lopez, Badilla, Gomez, Misso (Munoz), Ledezma (Mullins).

MUNICIPAL (Guat) 10 (Plata 5, Funes 2, Chinchilla, Mendez, Obaldi)
MOULIEN (Guad) 0
Ref: E. Ramirez (Honduras)
Municipal: Chuga, Ruano, Chinchilla, Hernandez, Obaldi, Funes, Salguero, Delgui, Garcia (Mendez), Plata, Valencia(Espinosa).
Moulien: Maskatan, Folleville, Gradel, Mitel, Labiche, Pamphile, Selbonne, Choucoutou, Makongo, Sermansen (Larochelle), Marcin (Fostin).

Final table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dep. Saprissa	3	2	1	0	8	2	7
Municipal	3	2	0	1	13	3	6
Alajuelense	3	1	1	1	13	6	4
Moulien	3	0	0	3	1	24	0

MAJOR CLUB INTERNATIONALS

Nov.23: Universidad Autonoma de Mexico 6 Colo Colo (Chile) 0 *(agg: 9-1 for Copa Confraternidad)*; Universidad de Chile 4 Boca Juniors (Arg) 2.

ARGENTINA

NATIONAL A DIVISION – CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

WEEK ENDING NOVEMBER 28

DEPORTIVO ESPSANOL 0
FC OESTE 1 (Lorenzo 58)

ROSARIO CENTRAL 2 (Carbonari 14, Silva 74)
GIMNASIA Y ESGRIMA

BANFIELD 1 (Glaria 81)
COLON SANTA FE 1 (Rodriguez 83)

ESTUDIANTES 2 (Veron 39, Calderon 53 pen)
LANUS 1 (Simionato 33 pen)

GIMNASIA JUJUY 4 (Trimarch (35, 77 pen, Batista 55 pen, Gorostidi 70)
PLATENSE 3 (Morales 27, 81, Romagnoli 80)

HURACAN 1 (Guerra 84)
INDEPENDIENTE 0

RACING CLUB 4 (Reinoso 18, C. Lopez 26, Capria 37 pen, Delgado 62)
NEWELL'S OLD BOYS 1 (Raggio 29)

RIVER PLATE 0
BOCA JUNIORS 0

VELEZ SARSFIELD 2 (Bassedas 34, Pellegrino 59)
ARGENTINOS JUNIORS 0

BELGRANO CORDOBA 1 (M. Flores 29)
SAN LORENZO 2 (E. Gonzalez 44, Netto 82)

WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 4

BOCA JUNIORS 4 (MacAllister 30, Maradona 43 pen, Martinez 77, Scotto 89)
RACING CLUB 6 (Capria 4, 47, 60, C. Lopez 12, 87, Delgado 10)

SAN LORENZO 0
VELEZ SARSFIELD 2 (Pandolfi 24, Posse 44)

NEWELL'S OLD BOYS 1 (Raggio 28 pen)
ESTUDIANTES 2 (Palermo 23, Mazzuco 62)

LANUS 3 (Morales 30, Coyette 43, A. Lopez 82)
DEPORTIVO ESPANOL 2 (Odriozola 68, 90 pen)

FC OESTE 1 (Samso 76 pen)
GIMNASIA JUJUY 1 (Barella 26)

PLATENSE 1 (Dalla Libera 41 pen)
HURACAN 2 (Pelletti 10, Marini 72)

COLON SANTA FE 2 (Saralegui 23, Muller 66)
ROSARIO CENTRAL 0

INDEPENDIENTE 1 (J. Martinez 14)
BELGRANO CORDOBA 0

ARGENTINOS JUNIORS 0
BANFIELD 1 (Cruz 41)

GIMNASIA Y ESGRIMA 1 (Sanguinetti 23)
RIVER PALTE 1 (Rivarola 15 pen)

WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 11

RACING CLUB 2 (Capria 20, De Vicente 30)
GIMNASIA Y ESGRIMA 0

ROSARIO CENTRAL 0
ARGENTINOS 0

BANFIELD 2 (Arce 54, Alvarenga 74)
SAN LORENZO 5 (Biaggio 17, 23, 54, E. Gonzalez 40, Netto 67 pen)

VELEZ SARSFIELD 2 (Flores 48, 90)
BELGRANO CORDOBA 0

DEPORTIVO ESPANOL 3 (Odriozola 27, 79 pen, Benitez 60)
NEWELL'S OLD BOYS 3 (Gabrich 3, 12, 47)

PLATENSE 2 (Maisterra 20, F. Rodriguez 35)
INDEPENDIENTE 2 (Cagna 43, 82)

ESTUDIANTES 2 (Pratola 45, Maciel 88)
BOCA JUNIORS 1 (Fabbri 33)

RIVER PLATE 3 (Amato 22, Gallardo 36, 66)
COLON SANTA FE 2 (Gambier 74, Risso 88)

HURACAN 1 (N. Fernandez 87)
FC OESTE 0

GIMNASIA JUJUY 0
LANUS 2 (A.Lopez 21, 53)

NEWELL'S OLD BOYS 1 (Faggiani 25)
INDEPENDIENTE 0

WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 17

GIMNASIA Y ESGRIMA 0
ESTUDIANTES 3 (Calderon 11, 35, Catan 26)

COLON DE SANTA FE 5 (Saralegui 61, 75, 83, Risso 70, Gambier 79)
RACING CLUB 1 (C. Lopez 16)

ARGENTINOS JUNIORS 3 (Bernuncio 35, 49, Quinteros 38)
RIVER PLATE 1 (Amato 90)

BELGRANO CORDOBA 0
BANFIELD 0

INDEPENDIENTE 0
VELEZ SARSFIELD 3 (Trotta 5 pen, Camps 61, Basualdo 82)
NEWELL'S OLD BOYS 0
GIMNASIA JUJUY 0

LANUS 1 (Schurrer 34)
HURACAN 0

SAN LORENZO 2 (Biaggio 22, Rivadero 51)
ROSARIO CENTRAL 2 (Falaschi 41, Fuarte 43)

BOCA JUNIORS 2 (Maradona 53 pen, Martinez 67)
DEPORTIVO ESPANOL 2 (Galvan 46, Odriozola 51)

PLATENSE 4 (Funas 1, Sarabia 35, Mena 40, 48 pen)
FC OESTE 1 (V. Lopez 69)

National A Division - opening championship (final)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Velez Sarsfield	19	13	2	4	29	13	41
Lanus	19	10	5	4	25	16	35
Racing Club	19	10	5	4	35	24	35
Boca Juniors	19	9	8	2	23	16	35
San Lorenzo	19	9	5	5	35	24	32
Huracan	19	9	5	5	25	22	32
River Plate	19	7	8	4	21	20	29
Gimnasia Jujuy	19	8	4	7	28	30	28
Estudiantes	19	6	7	6	29	23	25
Rosario Central	19	5	9	5	18	20	24
Platense	19	5	8	6	25	24	23
Newell's Old Boys	19	5	8	6	26	32	23
Colon Santa Fe	19	5	6	8	22	20	21
Independiente	19	4	9	6	15	18	21
Gimnasia Esgrima	19	5	6	8	14	25	21
Argentinos Jun.	19	5	4	10	18	22	19
Ferro Carril Oeste	19	3	8	8	21	29	17
Dep. Espanol	19	3	8	8	18	26	17
Banfield	19	2	8	9	17	29	14
Belgrano Cordoba	19	2	7	10	12	23	13

Bottom relegation averages (of points over three seasons - bottom two relegated at end of season): Argentinos Jrs 0,884; Dep. Espanol & Belgrano 0,863; FC Oeste 0,863; Colon 0,842.

BRAZIL

National Championship (2nd round - final standings)

Group A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	TP
Botafogo	12	8	3	1	22	6	27	45
Corinthians	12	7	2	3	19	15	23	31
Juventude	12	6	5	1	19	12	23	35
Palmeiras	12	7	1	4	18	11	22	45
Bragantino	12	5	4	3	20	16	19	40
Gremio	12	6	1	5	14	14	19	31
Flamengo	11	3	6	2	12	13	15	23
Cruzeiro	12	4	2	6	17	15	14	39
Parana	12	3	5	4	17	16	14	33
Guarani	12	4	1	7	14	19	13	25
Vitoria	12	3	2	7	14	18	11	22
Paysandu	12	1	5	6	11	24	8	16

Group B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	TP
Santos	12	8	3	1	25	13	27	46
At. Mineiro	12	8	2	2	23	15	26	37
Goias	12	6	1	5	17	14	19	35
Portuguesa	12	4	5	3	12	14	17	35
Sao Paulo	12	4	2	6	17	18	14	33
Internacional	12	3	5	4	14	12	14	35
Vasco	12	4	1	7	18	19	13	24
Sport Recife	12	4	1	7	16	18	13	25
Fluminense	12	2	7	3	9	12	13	34
Bahia	12	3	3	6	9	24	12	26
Criciuma	12	2	6	4	10	12	12	27
Un. Sao Joao	11	1	1	9	9	26	4	8

Group winners Botafogo and Santos qualify for semi-finals with first round group winners Fluminese and Cruzeiro - Paysandu and Uniao Sao Joao relegated for winnng lowest number of points in both rounds (TP).

CHILE

First Division (final standings)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Univ. de Chile	30	18	8	4	64	30	62
Univ. Catolica	30	17	9	4	50	22	60
Colo Colo	30	15	7	8	61	35	52
Temuco	30	12	9	9	49	34	45
Cobreloa	30	11	11	8	49	40	44
O'Higgins	30	10	12	8	52	41	42
Coquimbo	30	11	9	10	47	40	42
Antofagasta	30	12	6	12	44	49	42
Union Espanol	30	11	7	12	45	47	40
Palestino	30	11	5	14	45	49	38
Osorno	30	9	11	10	34	49	38
Concepcion	30	8	10	12	38	44	34
Atacama	30	7	9	14	35	65	30
Huachipato	30	6	11	13	40	55	29
La Serena	30	7	8	15	35	60	29
Everton	30	7	4	19	30	58	25

Second to fifth-placed teams play off for vice-championship, La Serena and Everton relegated automatically.

PARAGUAY

First Division – 2nd round (final standings)

1) Olimpia 25pts; 2) Cerro Porteno 24; 3) Guarani 22; 4) Sol de America 20; 5) Humaita 17; 6) Colegiales 15; 7) Sport Colombia, Libertad 14; 9) Sportivo Lugueno 13; 10) San Lorenzo 10; 11) Nacional, Presidente Hayes 9; 13) Cerro Cora 5.

VENEZUELA

Opening Championship – (final) leaders

Occidental Group: 1. Universidad de lose Andes 27 pts; 2. Trujillanos, Unicol 26; 4. Tachira *(also qualified: El Vigia, Estudiantes).*
Oriental Group: 1. Caracas FC 36; 2. Dep. Italia 28; 3. Minerven; 4. Anzoategui; 5. Valencia; 6. Mineros de Guyana.
(Top six of each group qualify for final tournament)

ECUADOR

First Division – final round (final standings)

	P	W	D	L	Pts
Espoli	10	6	3	1	21
Barcelona	10	5	3	2	18
Nacional	10	4	3	3	15
Emelec	10	4	2	4	14
Liga de Quito	10	3	2	5	11
Aucas	10	1	1	8	4

COLOMBIA

First Division opening championship (final)

Group A	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dep Cali	18	11	4	3	37	20	37
Tolima	18	8	5	5	22	24	29
Millonarios	18	7	6	5	25	18	27
Union Magdalena	18	8	3	7	21	20	27
Caldas	18	5	8	5	23	20	23
Bucamaranga	18	6	5	7	18	20	23
Quindio	18	6	3	9	25	30	21
Ind. Medellin	18	2	5	11	18	31	11
Group B							
Nacional	18	9	5	4	29	23	32
America	18	8	6	4	39	24	30
Atletico Junior	18	7	4	7	23	26	25
Huila	18	6	6	6	29	34	24
Ind. Santa Fe	18	6	5	7	28	26	23
Envigado	18	5	6	7	19	19	22
Pereira	18	3	9	6	19	23	18
Tulua	18	2	9	8	17	23	15

Group winners Dep. Cali beat Nacional 2-1 for 1.5 and 1 bonus point for final round -
Runners-up play-off: America beat Tolima 3-2 for 0.75 and 0.50 bonus points for final round.

MEXICO

First Division

Group 1	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guadalajara	17	7	5	5	21	18	26
Veracruz	17	8	2	7	24	22	26
Univ.Nuevo Leon	17	6	7	4	21	22	25
Santos	17	5	7	5	21	17	22
Toluca	17	5	3	9	18	26	18
Group 2							
America	17	8	6	3	31	15	30
Celaya	17	4	8	5	19	22	20
Atlante	17	4	6	7	19	28	18
Morelia	17	3	4	10	18	36	13
Puebla	17	2	5	10	18	33	11
Group 3							
Leon	17	7	5	5	28	25	26
Cruz Azul	17	5	9	3	26	16	24
UNAM	17	6	6	5	23	20	24
Monterrey	17	6	5	6	28	28	23
Group 4							
Necaxa	17	8	6	3	30	18	30
Atlas	17	7	6	4	31	29	27
Neza	17	5	6	6	27	30	21
UA. Guadalajara	17	3	12	2	23	21	21

COSTA RICA

First Division

1) Saprissa 38pts; 2) Herediano 33; 3) Alajuelense, Puntarenas 31; 5) Belen 27; 6) Cartagines 26; 7) Carmelita 25; 8) Ramonense 22; 9) San Carlos 19; 10) Perez Zeledon, Turrialba 18;12) Guanacaste 15.

EL SALVADOR

First Division

1) FAS 24pts; 2) Luis A. Firpo 23; 3) Aguila 21; 4) Adet 18; 5) Municipal Limeno 16; 6) Tiburones 13; 7) Marte 12; 8) El Roble, Dragon, Alianza 11.

HONDURAS

First Division

1) Motagua, Victoria, Marathon 21pts; 4) Platense 20; 5) Olimpia 19; 6) Real Espana 15; 7) Real Maya, Vida 14; 9) Independiente 10; 10) Broncos 9.

GUATEMALA

First Division

1) Comunicaciones 33pts; 2) Aurora 31; 3) Municipal 29; 4) Amatitlan 25; 5) Escuintla, Sacachispas, Suchitepeque 21; 8) Mitclan 20; 9) Xelaju 16; 10) Tally Juca, Coban Imperial 13: 12) Izabal 9.

PERU

Decentralized Championship - final round (final standings)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sporting Cristal	44	29	9	6	98	36	93
Alianza Lima	44	26	7	11	70	32	84
Universitario	44	25	10	9	70	37	84
Cienciano	44	21	8	15	58	55	71
Deportivo Sipesa	44	18	14	12	71	39	68
FBC Melgar	44	17	11	16	52	57	62
Dep.Municipal	44	17	11	16	64	61	62
Dep.San Agustin	44	14	11	19	53	72	53

BOLIVIA

National Championship – final standings

1) San Jose, Guabira 20

ATLANTA '96

THE Olympic Games – which open in Atlanta on July 19, though the soccer tournament will be staged anywhere BUT in the host city – has been the oldest international soccer tournament since the demise of the British Home Championship.

Its rules and regulations have varied over the years. In the 1920s it was considered an unofficial world championship, but then faded in importance after the launch of the World Cup in the 1930s.

Confusion over different countries' definitions of amateurism further reduced the status of the Olympic tournament. For most of the 30 years after the second world war it was dominated by the so-called 'state amateurs' of eastern Europe – notably Hungary, whose 1952 winning side in Helsinki featured Puskas, Kocsis, etc, who took England apart a year later at Wembley.

FIFA has always maintained some sort of restriction over player eligibility to guard the primacy of the World Cup. In the 1970s and 1980s, for example, European and South American nations were forbidden to use players who had appeared in World Cups. This had the effect of evening the balance between the traditional and the new soccer nations.

In Spain in 1992, FIFA persuaded the IOC to agree to running the Olympic tournament as an Under-23 event. It slotted neatly into FIFA's schedule, somewhere between the senior World Cup but above the 21-year-limit World Youth Cup.

The IOC, however, noted poor attendances at the matches and resented FIFA trying to dictate the inclusion in the Olympics of a second-class event.

After lengthy negotiation the Atlanta Games eligibility regulations were been agreed as follows: all 16 competing teams will select squads of players aged 23 or under with the right to include up to three over-age players (The Americans, in particular, thus hope to promote the event on the backs of established over-age stars such as, for example, Klinsmann of Germany or Romario of Brazil or Baggio of Italy).

A further complication is provided by the qualifying tournaments used by FIFA's various regional confederations.

Some confederations run specific Olympic qualifying tournaments. However UEFA, because the European fixture list is so crowded, use the two-year UEFA Under-21 tournament as the Olympic qualifying event. The problem here is that the UEFA event is an under-21 not under-23 competition, so the age-limit element is unbalanced.

Further problems are guaranteed because European clubs will be highly reluctant to release players (particularly the over-age stars) to play in the Olympics in late July and early August when they are needed to prepare for European and domestic competition back home or merely on holiday.

The finals tournament itself is, by contrast, one of the most securely-anchored of all. It has been virtually unchanged since the 1950s: four groups of four play mini-leagues with the top two teams in each group going into knock-out quarter-finals with subsequent semi-finals, third place match and final. The make-up of the finals is approximately half of the 16 teams coming from Europe, half from the rest of the world.

● The Atlanta Games will be the first to feature a women's football tournament – its inclusion following a sustained campaign by the American women's soccer movement. The United States – whose federation has just settled a long-running pay row with its star players – will be the hot favourites.

QUALIFYING TOURNAMENT

AFRICA

GROUP 1

15.04.95 Nigeria v Kenya 0:0
16.04.95 Egypt v Mauritius 1:0
16.04.95 Zambia v Botswana 2:0
16.04.95 Zimbabwe v Malawi 4:0
29.04.95 Kenya v Nigeria 0:3
29.04.95 Malawi v Zimbabwe 0:0
30.04.95 Botswana v Zambia 1:4
30.04.95 Mauritius v Egypt 0:1

GROUP 2

14.04.95 Algeria v Guinea 1:1
16.04.95 Mali v Togo 1:2
16.04.95 Morocco v Senegal 0:0
16.04.95 Tunisia v Burkina Faso 4:1
29.04.95 Senegal v Morocco 1:0
30.04.95 Guinea v Algeria 2:0
30.04.95 Togo v Mali 1:0
30.04.95 Burkina Faso v Tunisia 1:0

GROUP 3

15.04.95 South Africa v Burundi 1:1
16.04.95 Cameroon v Namibia 0:0
16.04.95 Gabon v Angola 1:3
16.04.95 Ghana v Congo 0:0
29.04.95 Namibia v Cameroon 0:1
30.04.95 Angola v Gabon 2:0
30.04.95 Burundi v South Africa 4:1
30.04.95 Congo v Ghana 0:0

2ND ROUND

12.08.95 Nigeria v Egypt 3:2
12.08.95 Senegal v Guinea 2:3
12.08.95 Tunisia v Togo 1:1
13.08.95 Burundi v Cameroon 1:0
13.08.95 Ghana v Angola 3:1
13.08.95 Zimbabwe v Zambia 1:1
25.08.95 Egypt v Nigeria 1:1
27.08.95 Angola v Ghana 1:0
27.08.95 Cameroon v Burundi 2:0
27.08.95 Guinea v Senegal 2:0
27.08.95 Togo v Tunisia 2:1
27.08.95 Zambia v Zimbabwe 1:2

CONCACAF

NORTH AND CENTRAL AMERICAN GROUP

PRELIMINARY ROUND

17.02.95 Guatemala v Belize 4:0
05.03.95 Belize v Guatemala 2:2

1ST ROUND

05.05.95 Guatemala v El Salvador 0:1
26.05.95 El Salvador v Guatemala 1:1
29.07.95 Bermuda v Costa Rica 0:2
06.08.95 Costa Rica v Bermuda 5:0
03.12.95 Panama v Mexico 0:5
13.12.95 Mexico v Panama 4:0

2ND ROUND

GROUP 1

04.06.95 Antigua v Cayman Is 1:2
04.06.95 Jamaica v St. Lucia 6:0
06.06.95 Antigua v Jamaica 1:6
06.06.95 Cayman Is v St. Lucia 0:4
08.06.95 Jamaica v Cayman 7:0
08.06.95 St Lucia v Antigua 3:0

GROUP 2

23.08.95 Guyana v St Vincent 1:2
25.08.95 Trinidad v Guyana 5:0
27.08.95 Trinidad v St Vincent 2:1

CONMEBOL

GROUP A

18.02.96 Brazil v Peru
19.02.96 Bolivia v Uruguay
21.02.96 Brazil v Paraguay
21.02.96 Peru v Uruguay
23.02.96 Bolivia v Brazil
23.02.96 Paraguay v Peru
25.02.96 Peru v Bolivia
25.02.96 Uruguay v Paraguay
27.02.96 Paraguay v Bolivia
27.02.96 Uruguay v Brazil

GROUP B

18.02.96 Argentina v Ecuador
18.02.96 Venezuela v Colombia
20.02.96 Argentina v Chile
20.02.96 Ecuador v Colombia
22.02.96 Chile v Ecuador
22.02.96 Venezuela v Argentina
24.02.96 Colombia v Chile
24.02.96 Ecuador v Venezuela
26.02.96 Chile v Venezuela
26.02.96 Colombia v Argentina

ASIA

GROUP A

24.06.95 Singapore v Malaysia 2:0
02.07.95 China v Singapore 4:0
09.07.95 China v Malaysia 2:1
16.07.95 Malaysia v Singapore 0:0
22.07.95 Malaysia v China 0:2
29.07.95 Singapore v China 1:3

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
China	4	4	0	0	11	2	12
Singapore	4	1	1	2	3	7	4
Malaysia	4	0	1	3	1	6	1

GROUP B

26.05.95 Thailand v Japan 0:5
28.05.95 Japan v Chinese Taipei 4:1
30.05.95 Thailand v Chinese Taipei 7:0
08.06.95 Thailand v Chinese Taipei 5:0
11.06.95 Japan v Chinese Taipei 6:0
14.06.95 Japan v Thailand 1:0

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Japan	4	4	0	0	16	1	12
Thailand	4	2	0	2	12	6	6
Chinese Taipei	4	0	0	4	1	22	0

GROUP C

21.05.95 Hong Kong v South Korea 0:5
25.05.95 Indonesia v South Korea 1:2
30.05.95 Indonesia v Hong Kong 1:0
19.08.95 South Korea v Hong Kong 7:0
22.08.95 South Korea v Indonesia 1:0
26.08.95 Hong Kong v Indonesia 1:4

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Korea	4	4	0	0	15	1	12
Indonesia	4	2	0	2	6	4	6
Hong Kong	4	0	0	4	1	17	0

GROUP D

07.10.95 Pakistan v Oman 0:2
11.10.95 Pakistan v India 1:2
18.10.95 Oman v India 3:2
22.10.95 India v Pakistan 3:1
25.10.95 Oman v Pakistan 6:0
29.10.95 India v Oman 1:2

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Oman	4	4	0	0	13	3	12
India	4	2	0	2	8	7	6
Pakistan	4	0	0	4	2	13	0

GROUP E

20.05.95 Kyrgyzstan v Uzbekistan 1:5
20.05.95 Tajikistan v Kazakhstan 0:3
10.06.95 Kyrgyzstan v Kazakhstan 2:2
10.06.95 Uzbekistan v Tajikistan 2:0
24.06.95 Uzbekistan v Kazakhstan 1:2
24.06.95 Tajikistan v Kyrgyzstan 3:0
12.08.95 Uzbekistan v Kyrgyzstan 2:1
12.08.95 Kazakhstan v Tajikistan 3:1
02.09.95 Kazakhstan v Kyrgyzstan 6:0
02.09.95 Tajikistan v Uzbekistan 1:1
07.10.95 Kyrgyzstan v Tajikistan 5:4
07.10.95 Kazakhstan v Uzbekistan 3:1

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kazakhstan	6	5	1	0	19	5	16
Uzbekistan	6	3	1	2	12	8	10
Tajikistan	6	1	1	4	9	14	4
Kyrgyzstan	6	1	1	4	9	22	4

GROUP F

24.08.95 Saudi Arabi v Syria 2:0
31.08.95 Kuwait v Saudi Arabi 0:1
08.09.95 Syria v Kuwait 0:1
15.09.95 Syria v Saudi Arabi 0:1
21.09.95 Saudi Arabi v Kuwait 0:0
28.09.95 Kuwait v Syria 2:2

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Saudi Arabia	4	3	1	0	4	0	10
Kuwait	4	1	2	1	3	3	5
Syria	4	0	1	3	2	6	1

GROUP G

13.09.95 Turkmenistan v Iran 2:4
23.09.95 UAE v Turkmenistan 2:1
29.09.95 Iran v UAE 1:1
05.10.95 Iran v Turkmenistan 4:0
15.10.95 Turkmenistan v UAE 1:1
22.10.95 UAE v Iran 1:0

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
UAE	4	2	2	0	5	3	8
Iran	4	2	1	1	9	4	7
Turkmenistan	4	0	1	3	4	11	1

GROUP H

15.09.95 Jordan v Qatar 1:2
22.09.95 Qatar v Iraq 0:0
29.09.95 Jordan v Iraq 0:4
06.10.95 Qatar v Jordan 4:2
13.10.95 Iraq v Qatar 3:2
20.10.95 Iraq v Jordan 1:1

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iraq	4	2	2	0	8	3	8
Qatar	4	2	1	1	8	6	7
Jordan	4	0	1	3	4	11	1

EUROPE

GROUP 1

04.09.94 Israel v Poland 2:2
06.09.94 Romania v Azerbaijan 5:2
06.09.94 Slovakia v France 0:3
07.10.94 France v Romania 0:0
11.10.94 Israel v Slovakia 2:0
11.10.94 Poland v Azerbaijan 5:0
11.11.94 Romania v Slovakia 0:0
15.11.94 Poland v France 0:4
15.11.94 Azerbaijan v Israel 1:2
13.12.94 Israel v Romania 0:1
13.12.94 Azerbaijan v France 0:5
28.03.95 Israel v France 1:1
28.03.95 Romania v Poland 1:2
28.03.95 Slovakia v Azerbaijan 3:0
25.04.95 Poland v Israel 1:0
25.04.95 Azerbaijan v Romania 0:5
26.04.95 France v Slovakia 0:1
06.06.95 Poland v Slovakia 1:0
06.06.95 Romania v Israel 1:0
15.08.95 Azerbaijan v Slovakia 1:0
16.08.95 France v Poland 4:1
05.09.95 Poland v Romania 3:3
05.09.95 Slovakia v Israel 1:1
06.09.95 Azerbaijan 5:0
10.10.95 Israel v Azerbaijan 4:0
10.10.95 Romania v France 0:0
10.10.95 Slovakia v Poland 3:1
14.11.95 Slovakia v Romania 3:1
14.11.95 Azerbaijan v Poland 1:2
15.11.95 France v Israel 3:0

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
France	10	6	3	1	25	3	21
Poland	10	5	2	3	18	18	17
Romania	10	4	4	2	17	10	16
Slovakia	10	4	2	4	11	10	14
Israel	10	3	3	4	12	11	12
Azerbaijan	10	1	0	9	5	36	3

GROUP 2

06.09.94 Belgium v Armenia 7:0
07.09.94 Cyprus v Spain 0:6
07.09.94 Macedonia v Denmark 5:3
08.10.94 Armenia v Cyprus 1:2
11.10.94 Denmark v Belgium 0:1
11.10.94 Macedonia v Spain 0:1
15.11.94 Belgium v Macedonia 7:0
15.11.94 Spain v Denmark 1:0
16.11.94 Cyprus v Armenia 2:1
16.12.94 Belgium v Spain 3:3
17.12.94 Macedonia v Cyprus 1:0
28.03.95 Spain v Belgium 1:1
29.03.95 Cyprus v Denmark 1:5
26.04.95 Belgium v Cyprus 1:0
26.04.95 Denmark v Macedonia 5:2
26.04.95 Armenia v Spain 0:3
10.05.95 Armenia v Macedonia 2:0
06.06.95 Spain v Armenia 4:0
07.06.95 Denmark v Cyprus 4:0
07.06.95 Macedonia v Belgium 3:0
16.08.95 Armenia v Denmark 2:3
05.09.95 Belgium v Denmark 2:2
05.09.95 Spain v Cyprus 3:1
06.09.95 Macedonia v Armenia 3:2
06.10.95 Armenia v Belgium 0:3
10.10.95 Denmark v Spain 5:1
11.10.95 Cyprus v Macedonia 3:2
14.11.95 Denmark v Armenia 4:0
14.11.95 Spain v Macedonia 4:0
15.11.95 Cyprus v Belgium 1:1

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	10	7	2	1	27	10	23
Denmark	10	6	1	3	31	15	19
Belgium	10	5	4	1	26	10	19
Macedonia	10	4	0	6	16	27	12
Cyprus	10	3	1	6	10	25	10
Armenia	10	1	0	9	8	31	3

GROUP 3

06.09.94 Hungary v Turkey 2:1
06.09.94 Iceland v Sweden 0:1
11.10.94 Switzerland v Sweden 0:5
11.10.94 Turkey v Iceland 3:0
15.11.94 Sweden v Hungary 0:1
15.11.94 Switzerland v Iceland 2:1
13.12.94 Turkey v Switzerland 1:1
28.03.95 Hungary v Switzerland 1:0
28.03.95 Turkey v Sweden 0:0
25.04.95 Hungary v Sweden 2:1
25.04.95 Switzerland v Turkey 0:2
31.05.95 Sweden v Iceland 1:0
10.06.95 Iceland v Hungary 1:1
15.08.95 Iceland v Switzerland 2:4
05.09.95 Sweden v Switzerland 1:0
05.09.95 Turkey v Hungary 2:1
10.10.95 Iceland v Turkey 2:3
10.10.95 Switzerland v Hungary 2:3
10.11.95 Hungary v Iceland 3:1
14.11.95 Sweden v Turkey 6:1

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hungary	8	6	1	1	14	8	19
Sweden	8	5	1	2	15	4	16
Turkey	8	4	2	2	13	12	14
Switzerland	8	2	1	5	9	16	7
Iceland	8	0	1	7	7	18	1

GROUP 4

03.09.94 Estonia v Croatia 1:2
06.09.94 Ukraine v Lithuania 3:2
08.09.94 Slovenia v Italy 1:1
06.10.94 Estonia v Italy 1:4
08.10.94 Croatia v Lithuania 2:0
11.10.94 Ukraine v Slovenia 1:0
12.11.94 Ukraine v Estonia 3:0
15.11.94 Slovenia v Lithuania 3:0
16.11.94 Italy v Croatia 2:1
23.03.95 Italy v Estonia 7:0
24.03.95 Croatia v Ukraine 1:0
28.03.95 Lithuania v Croatia 0:1
28.03.95 Slovenia v Estonia 5:0
29.03.95 Ukraine v Italy 2:1
25.04.95 Croatia v Slovenia 0:2
25.04.95 Croatia v Slovenia 0:2
25.04.95 Estonia v Ukraine 2:5
27.04.95 Lithuania v Italy 0:2
06.06.95 Lithuania v Slovenia 1:2
10.06.95 Estonia v Slovenia 1:2
10.06.95 Ukraine v Croatia 1:1
15.08.95 Estonia v Lithuania 0:5
02.09.95 Croatia v Estonia 1:0
05.09.95 Lithuania v Ukraine 3:3
07.09.95 Italy v Slovenia 1:0
05.10.95 Croatia v Italy 2:2
10.10.95 Lithuania v Estonia 3:0
10.10.95 Slovenia v Ukraine 0:5
10.11.95 Italy v Ukraine 2:1
14.11.95 Slovenia v Croatia 4:2
15.11.95 Italy v Lithuania 0:0

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Italy	10	6	3	1	22	8	21
Ukraine	10	6	2	2	24	12	20
Slovenia	10	6	1	3	19	12	19
Croatia	10	5	2	3	13	12	17
Lithuania	10	2	2	6	14	16	8
Estonia	10	0	0	10	5	37	0

GROUP 5

05.09.94 Czech Rep. v Malta 1:0
06.09.94 Luxembourg v Holland 0:4
08.09.94 Norway v Byelorussia 4:0
11.10.94 Malta v Czech Rep. 0:7
11.10.94 Norway v Holland 1:0
11.10.94 Byelorussia v Luxembourg 3:0
15.11.94 Holland v Czech Rep. 2:2
13.12.94 Malta v Norway 2:3
13.12.94 Holland v Luxembourg 3:0
21.02.95 Malta v Luxembourg 1:0
28.03.95 Luxemburg v Norway 0:8
28.03.95 Holland v Malta 4:0
28.03.95 Czech Rep. v Byelorussia 2:0
25.04.95 Norway v Luxembourg 5:0
25.04.95 Byelorussia v Malta 4:0
25.04.95 Czech Rep. v Holland 2:2
24.05.95 Byelorussia v Norway 4:2
06.06.95 Luxembourg v Czech Rep. 0:7
06.06.95 Norway v Malta 3:0
06.06.95 Byelorussia v Holland 3:1
15.08.95 Norway v Czech Rep. 3:4
05.09.95 Luxembourg v Malta 0:0
05.09.95 Holland v Byelorussia 3:0
05.09.95 Czech Rep. v Norway 1:2
06.10.95 Byelorussia v Czech Rep. 0:3
10.10.95 Luxembourg v Byelorussia 0:5
10.10.95 Malta v Holland 0:2
11.11.95 Malta v Byelorussia 1:1
14.11.95 Holland v Norway 2:1
14.11.95 Czech Rep. v Luxembourg 4:0

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Czech Rep.	10	7	2	1	33	9	23
Norway	10	7	0	3	32	13	21
Holland	10	6	2	2	23	9	20
Byelorussia	10	5	1	4	20	16	16
Malta	10	1	2	7	4	25	5
Luxembourg	10	0	1	9	0	40	1

GROUP 6

06.09.94 England v Portugal 0:0
06.09.94 Latvia v Rep. Ireland 1:1
08.10.94 Latvia v Portugal 0:1
11.10.94 Austria v England 1:3
12.11.94 Portugal v Austria 2:0
15.11.94 England v Rep. Ireland 1:0
27.03.95 Rep. Ireland v England 0:2
28.03.95 Austria v Latvia 0:0
25.04.95 Rep. Ireland v Portugal 1:1
25.04.95 Latvia v England 0:1
02.06.95 Portugal v Latvia 4:0
07.06.95 England v Latvia 4:0
10.06.95 Rep. Ireland v Austria 3:0
15.08.95 Latvia v Austria 0:2
02.09.95 Portugal v England 2:0
05.09.95 Austria v Rep. Ireland 1:0
10.10.95 Austria v Portugal 0:1
10.10.95 Rep. Ireland v Latvia 1:0
14.11.95 England v Austria 2:1
14.11.95 Portugal v Rep. Ireland 3:1

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portugal	8	6	2	0	14	2	20
England	8	6	1	1	13	4	19
Rep. Ireland	8	2	2	4	7	9	8
Austria	8	2	1	5	5	11	7
Latvia	8	0	2	6	1	14	2

GROUP 7

06.09.94 Georgia v Moldova 3:0
11.10.94 Bulgaria v Georgia 1:0
11.10.94 Moldova v Wales 1:0
15.11.94 Bulgaria v Moldova 2:0
15.11.94 Georgia v Wales 1:2
13.12.94 Wales v Bulgaria 1:1
13.12.94 Moldova v Germany 1:1
28.03.95 Bulgaria v Wales 3:1
28.03.95 Georgia v Germany 0:2
25.04.95 Germany v Wales 1:0
25.04.95 Moldova v Bulgaria 0:0
06.06.95 Bulgaria v Germany 2:0
06.06.95 Wales v Georgia 5:1
05.09.95 Germany v Georgia 3:0
05.09.95 Wales v Moldova 1:0
07.10.95 Germany v Moldova 3:1
10.10.95 Wales v Germany 1:5
10.10.95 Georgia v Bulgaria 1:2
14.11.95 ermany v Bulgaria 7:0
14.11.95 Moldova v Georgia 2:1

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Germany	8	6	1	1	22	5	19
Bulgaria	8	5	2	1	11	10	17
Wales	8	3	1	4	11	13	10
Moldova	8	2	2	4	5	11	8
Georgia	8	1	0	7	7	17	3

GROUP 8

06.09.94 Finland v Scotland 1:0
11.10.94 Greece v Finland 3:4
11.10.94 Russia v San Marino 3:0
15.11.94 Greece v San Marino 4:0
15.11.94 Scotland v Russia 2:1
13.12.94 Finland v San Marino 4:0
17.12.94 Greece v Scotland 1:2
28.03.95 San Marino v Finland 0:6
28.03.95 Russia v Scotland 1:2
25.04.95 Greece v Russia 0:1
25.04.95 San Marino v Scotland 0:1
06.06.95 San Marino v Russia 0:7
10.06.95 Finland v Greece 1:0
15.08.95 Finland v Russia 1:1
15.08.95 Scotland v Greece 3:0
05.09.95 San Marino v Greece 1:3
06.09.95 Scotland v Finland 5:0
10.10.95 Russia v Greece 0:1
14.11.95 Scotland v San Marino 1:0
14.11.95 Russia v Finland 3:0

FINAL TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Scotland	8	7	0	1	16	4	21
Finland	8	5	1	2	17	12	16
Russia	8	4	1	3	17	6	13
Greece	8	3	0	5	12	12	9
San Marino	8	0	0	8	1	29	0

AFRICA

(5 places)

FIRST ROUND

Sudan v Zambia, Namibia v Mozambique, Tanzania v Ghana, Swaziland v Gabon, Uganda v Angola, Mauritius v Zaire, Malawi v South Africa, Madagascar v Zimbabwe, Guinea-Bissau v Guinea, Rwanda v Tunisia, Congo v Ivory Coast, Kenya v Algeria, Burundi v Sierra Leone, Mauritania v Burkina Faso, Togo v Senegal, Gambia v Liberia.

SECOND ROUND

First-round winners plus Cameroon, Nigeria, Egypt and Morocco will be drawn into five groups of four. Group winners qualify for France '98.

ASIA

(3 or 4 places)

GROUP 1: Taipei, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia
GROUP 2: Maldives, Kurdistan, Syria, Iran
GROUP 3: United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Jordan
GROUP 4: Macau, Nepal, Oman, Japan
GROUP 5: Cambodia, Yemen, Indonesia, Uzbekistan
GROUP 6: Thailand, Hong Kong, South Korea
GROUP 7: Lebanon, Singapore, Kuwait
GROUP 8: Tadikistan, Vietnam, Turkmenistan, China
GROUP 9: Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Iraq
GROUP 10: Philippines, Sri Lanka, India, Qatar
Group winners split into two semi-final groups of five. Top two from each semi-final group advance to Asian finals. Top three qualify for France '98; fourth place plays off against Oceania winner.

EUROPE

(15 places)

GROUP 1: Denmark, Greece, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia
GROUP 2: Italy, England, Poland, Georgia, Moldova
GROUP 3: Norway, Switzerland, Finland, Hungary, Azerbaijan
GROUP 4: Sweden, Scotland, Austria, Latvia, Byelorussia, Estonia
GROUP 5: Russia, Bulgaria, Israel, Cyprus, Luxembourg
GROUP 6: Spain, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Yugoslavia, Malta, Faroe Islands
GROUP 7: Holland, Belgium, Turkey, Wales, San Marino
GROUP 8: Romania, Republic of Ireland, Lithuania, Iceland, Macedonia, Liechtenstein
GROUP 9: Germany, Portugal, Northern Ireland, Ukraine, Albania, Armenia
Group winners and the top runners-up qualify for France '98. Other runners-up paired up for home-and-home playoff, with winners qualifying for France '98. France has automatic berth as host nation.

CONCACAF

(3 berths available)

CARIBBEAN ZONE

1ST ROUND
Aruba v Dominican Republic
Bahamas v St Kitts & Nevis
Guyana v Grenada
Dominica v Antigua
2ND ROUND
Bermuda v Trinidad & Tobago
Puerto Rico v St Vincent
Cayman Islands v Cuba
Bahamas or St Kitts v St Lucia
Guyana or Grenada v Haiti
Surinam v Jamaica
Dominica or Antigua v Barbados
Aruba or Dominican Rep. v Dutch Antilles
3RD ROUND
Teams drawn into pairs with winners (A, B, C, D) going to semi-finals

CENTRAL AMERICAN ZONE

1ST ROUND
Nicaragua v Guatemala
Belize v Panama
Winners qualify for semi-finals
SEMI-FINALS
GROUP 1: United States, Costa Rica, Nicaragua or Guatemala, Caribbean D winner
GROUP 2: Canada, El Salvador, Belize or Panama winner, Caribbean A winner
GROUP 3: Mexico, Honduras, Caribbean B winner, Caribbean C winner
Top two in each group advance to single group for CONCACAF finals. Top three in final stage qualify for France '98.

OCEANIA

(0 or 1 place)

1ST ROUND

MELANESIAN GROUP: Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu.

POLYNESIAN GROUP: Cook Islands, Tonga, Western Samoa.
Melanesian Group winner qualifies for second round along with winner of play-off between Melanesian Group runner-up and Polynesian Group winner.

SEMI-FINALS

GROUP 1: Australia, Tahiti, Polynesian-Melanesian qualifier

GROUP 2: New Zealand, Fiji, Melanesian winner
Group winners advance to home-and-home play-off, with winner facing fourth-place Asian team for berth in France '98.

SOUTH AMERICA

(5 places)

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Brian Glanville's
LAST WORD

Squalor is now the name of the game

Walk out . . . Mark McGhee turns his back on Leicester

WELCOME to the clean and wonderful world of English soccer. The world in which a manager can blithely walk out on his club twice in a year, the second of them being thus jilted for the second time.

The world in which an established young Premiership player can be charged, unjustly one hopes, with the unthinkable crime of stealing suitcases off an airport carousel.

The world in which a Scottish international, imprisoned for violent conduct, is welcomed back at his new club with a band of bagpipes.

The world in which the once dignified and delightful ceremony of the FA Cup draw, broadcast on midday Mondays to an expectant nation, was prostituted by the Football Association to a BBC television show which earned total contempt for its tatty inadequacy.

Not forgetting, of course, the long running Grobbelaar-Segers-Fashanu show, which no doubt will have made further progress of some sort by the time you read this. All three, as we so sadly know, are charged with fixing or trying to fix matches.

It was Sam Goldwyn senior who coined the famous phrase, "A verbal contract isn't worth the paper it's written on." As far as our football managers are concerned, a written contract doesn't seem to be worth much either. The 'Me Generation' is still with us.

Football managers appear to think that any attempt to hold them to their word, when they have the chance to better themselves – i.e. earn more money – is a sin against justice and the light.

Mark McGhee, I believe, didn't have a formal contract with Leicester, but it seems pretty clear that a contractual situation existed under prevailing British law. Previously, he had turned his back on Reading, after Brian Little had walked out, in bitterly controversial circumstances, on Leicester and gone to manage Aston Villa: embarrassed by the revelation of a letter which appeared to contradict his insistence that Villa had nothing to do with his going.

Before that, we had Mike Walker walking out on Norwich to manage Everton, with so little success that he was, ere long, on his bike from Goodison.

Now he has warned McGhee that he may well have made a self-destructive move in accepting the poisoned chalice from Wolves, where Graham Taylor sank like a stone. (Didn't he with England?)

Even David Pleat parted company somewhat brusquely with Luton Town earlier this year. Then you can go back to the Ron Atkinson affair when, having apparently pledged himself to stay at Sheffield Wednesday, where Pleat is now, he suddenly changed his mind again and went to Villa. Another poisoned chalice, it transpired.

Duncan Ferguson, jailed for butting a Raith Rovers opponent,

'Lopakhin of football' . . . Sir John Hall

and with three previous convictions for violence, was given a stay of execution from his suspension by the Scottish FA when Everton obtained a judicial review. Whereupon, on his return to the field in a reserve match, Everton greeted him like a conquering hero, with those pipers.

The charge of bringing the game into disrepute is a wide and vague one, sometimes ill used by the FA, but in these particular cases it surely would be relevant. Squalid is as squalid does, and squalor is surely becoming the name of our game.

We must fervently hope that when Arsenal's David Hillier comes to trial for the Gatwick Suitcases affair – in which he is charged with two others, one a fellow professional – he is found not guilty. It seems incredible that a highly-paid footballer could do anything of the kind.

As for the FA, they can hardly charge itself with bringing the game into disrepute with its tawdry, cheap, misbegotten FA Cup draw show, but it's a pity that it cannot.

Perhaps if they had to go ahead with anything so crass and superfluous they might have hired a couple of real comedians, Baddiel and Skinner, say, rather than embarrass us all with the dreadful double act of Law and Venables.

NO SIR JOHN, NO MAO

SIR JOHN HALL doesn't, one understands, wish to become the next chairman of the FA, in succession to Bert The Inert. Understandable; he is hardly an Establishment figure, and he has harsh words for the FA. The old accusation that amateurs are set above professionals.

It's a charge which I have always rejected, but seeing what an inept body the FA has become in latter years, that gets harder and harder. When, under Graham Kelly it so foolishly and wantonly sold out by going into partnership with the Premier League clubs, the FA effectively abdicated their historic role; to hold the ring between the pro clubs and the game at large.

That role was a vital one, and never so well interpreted as under the aegis of Sir Stanley Rous when he was FA secretary. For the pro clubs are merely the icing on a gigantic cake. Again, as I have said before, the tension between League and FA was essentially a healthy one. The pro clubs pursued their own narrow interests, as they were perfectly entitled to do. The FA looked after, notionally at least, the broader interests of the game at large.

'It's a pity the FA cannot charge itself with bringing the game into disrepute with its tawdry, cheap, misbegotten FA Cup draw'

But this is something the FA has hardly done of late. Its ghastly coaching scheme, with its pseudo-scientific claptrap, has done untold harm to the game. Its so-called Senior International Committee has made one mistake after another. Where, in the name of rationality and progress, do we go from here?

Sir John has worked wonders at Newcastle and has splendid ideas for their future. But when he says that we need a figure like Mao Tse Tung at the head of our game, does he know what he's implying? The so-called Permanent Cultural Revolution was an enduring, persecutory horror; as a recent, devastating BBC TV documentary showed us. It concentrated on the hounding and humiliating of perfectly decent, gentle music teachers and musicians.

No, I don't want Mao Tse Tung, even if one would not necessarily get his other revealed indulgence; the participation in orgies with very young women. Sir John is the Lopakhin of our football; the character from Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard* who rose from serfdom to take over the ancestral mansion; and chop down the cherry orchard itself.

A powerful FA with a forceful leader – oh, where is he? – could only benefit from its battles with Sir John, the son of a miner, who has conquered the North East. At present, it's no contest.

A PASSING INTEREST IN HODDLE

A QPR fan on White Hart Lane station pointed out to me that in a recent *Guardian* interview, Bobby Robson lamented that we had no passers of the ball like Haynes and Hoddle.

Clearly he was forgetting that for years he had kept Hoddle out of his England teams and eventually in 1985 restored him in the most grudging manner. Only in 1986, when England were in pre-World Cup training in the USA did he eulogise Hoddle as the true successor to Haynes.

Which prompted me at the time to write that I didn't know the Road to Damascus passed through Colorado Springs.

Pass master . . . Fulham's Johnny Haynes

Soccer Cities

RIO DE JANEIRO

Brian Homewood on carnivals and crooks, too many clubs and not enough cash

THE stereotyped image of Rio de Janeiro is of a carnival every day of the year, a population mad on football, palm trees swaying in the year-round sun, plus, in the past few years at least, a crook on every corner.

The city does not *really* live up to this image. While the street carnival still takes place, it is not as widespread as before and the main event is held in a purpose-built 'sambadrome' where seats cost a fortune.

Far from partying, a surprisingly large proportion of the population stay at home most nights, watching the dross churned out by *TV Globo*.

The sun is often interrupted by the sort of prolonged wet and windy spells which make Ian McCaskill's eyes light up, and while Rio is undeniably dangerous, most robbers want only money and are not as psychopathic or sadistic as their counterparts in Britain and the United States. If you ask nicely, many will let you keep your credit card and may even give you enough money to take a bus home.

That leaves the football. Go to Maracana for a big derby when both the teams involved are on a good run and Rio lives up to its billing. The stadium will be packed for two hours before kick-off, fans jump up and down so much that the upper tier vibrates alarmingly, and the entrance of the protagonists is accompanied by a shower of tickertape and fireworks. Even football-haters will know when a major game is on.

Fans congregate at bars around the city hours before the action starts, while others drive around hooting incessantly and waving club flags out of car windows.

There is no hope of sitting at home and hoping to watch the game on TV afterwards without knowing who won. When a team score, celebrations echo around the buildings (Rio is very densely populated and windows tend to be open because of the climate) and the more exuberant fans let off firecrackers.

But the passion is restricted to the big games. A visit to a less attractive fixture, played in one of the smaller stadiums at 9.30 in the evening, may bring visions of the Icelandic Second Division.

The terraces are empty, the pitch is churned up as if a dozen combine harvesters have been driven across it, and the players look as if they would rather be at home watching a dubbed version of the latest Hollywood bloodbath on primetime TV.

The reality is that Rio fans are fickle and demanding. They do not like to suffer, they will not follow their team through thick and thin, and would not dream, for example, of turning out for a meaningless midweek game away to Volta Redonda, the Brazilian equivalent of a Wednesday night fixture away to Barnsley.

Nor are they prepared to support a medium-sized club that may win a trophy every 20 years or so. If clubs such as West Ham or QPR were from Rio, they would not be able to pull in crowds of 15,000 to 20,000 for every home game. Bangu and America, the local equivalents, usually play in front of a couple of thousand people on a good day.

Rio brio . . . Flamengo fans at Maracana

Rio has four major teams – Flamengo, Fluminense, Botafogo, the current Brazilian national champions, and Vasco da Gama – and they monopolise the support. Even in provincial towns with their own professional team, most people prefer to support one of the big four.

Tradition has it that Flamengo are the team of the poor classes, Fluminense represent the upper classes and Vasco the Portuguese descendants, but these distinctions are disappearing with time. The four dominate the Rio city championship and all play in the First Division of the national championship.

After them come Bangu and America, who occasionally threaten the big four's dominance of the city championship and usually play in the Second Division of the Brazilian championship.

> 'Every time the Maracana re-opens it is amid headlines about a new-look stadium . . . in truth all it has been given since 1950 are several coats of paint and a new pitch'

They may get into the top division of the Brazilian, depending on how many teams are taking part. That can range from 18 to 32, which in turn depends on the whims of the CBF.

There also are a number of minor outfits dotted around the suburbs with their own tiny stadiums. These teams, who include Madueira, Olaria, Sao Cristovao and Campo Grande, take part in the Rio championship and are nominally professional but their players earn only a couple of hundred pounds a month and often take second jobs to help make ends meet.

These clubs usually act as feeders for the major teams. In the past 20 years, the suburban clubs have lost out to clubs from provincial towns in the state of Rio de Janeiro, who are usually funded by wealthy businessmen looking to make a name for themselves. Volta Redonda and Americano have been the most successful of these clubs, while others include Friburgense, Cabofriense and Entrerriense.

Volta Redonda come from a hideously ugly steel town of the same name which lies around 90 miles from Rio on the highway to Sao Paulo.

Americano, from the city of Campos 150 miles east of Rio, were at the centre of the match-fixing scandal which broke out two years ago. Referees then were said to favour Americano, the pet of Rio federation president Eduardo Viana, but the scandal was duly swept under the carpet.

Both clubs play in the national championship's Third Division, a monstrous tournament featuring 109 clubs.

AMERICANO's dingy Godfredo Cruz stadium (*WORLD SOCCER* does not know who Godfredo Cruz was, but he must have done something wrong to have this ground named after him) is notorious for having one of the worst pitches in Brazil, possibly the world. Opponents claim it is deliberately kept in bad condition to bring teams such as Flamengo down to Americano's standard when they visit.

Back in Rio de Janeiro, the big four all have their own grounds which they use for lesser games. Flamengo play in Gavea in a ground that has a capacity of 10,000 and a superb view of the mountains topped by the statue of Christ. Fluminense have a neat 8,000-capacity ground in the suburb of Laranjeiras.

Botafogo play at the Caio Martins stadium, across the bay in the city of Niteroi, connected to Rio by a 15km bridge. Vasco's Sao Januario stadium, with a 27,000 capacity, is by far the best but also has the worst location, in the heart of an industrial area surrounded by slums.

The temple, of course, is Maracana. The big four play their most important games here – when it is not closed or when they are not arguing with the Rio de Janeiro state government, which owns it. It was shut for nearly a year after a fence at the front of the upper tier gave way in 1992 and dozens of fans went tumbling over the edge on to the seats below.

Two years earlier the ground had been closed for structural tests after the upper tier wobbled more than usual during the game.

There was another temporary closure a few weeks ago because the clubs said the government was taking too much of the money. Instead, the teams took their custom to Brazilian cities where First Division football is a rarity. The Botafogo-Flamengo fixture went to Fortaleza, 1,750 miles away in the North-East, where 74,000 turned out to watch.

Every time the Maracana re-opens it is amid headlines about a new-look stadium, but in truth all it has been given since inauguration in 1950 are several new coats of paint and a new pitch, admittedly the best in the country.

The crushes at the turnstiles on big-match days, the crumbling concrete and the official attendances – which many feel are always below the real attendances – are all examples of the disorganisation and lack of respect for the fans which sadly plague the Brazilian game.

Little and large . . . Vasco da Gama's Sao Januario stadium *(left)* and Maracana

Flashback

Happy days! The celebrations when Cameroon scored were among the highlights of the 1990 World Cup finals in Italy. And they happened surprisingly often. The Indomitable Lions were a revelation as they beat holders Argentina in their first match, topped their group, knocked out Colombia in the second round, and were unlucky losers to England in the quarter-final, after leading with only 10 minutes to go.

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LEE SHARPE

Man United's forgotten lineman plots his next step

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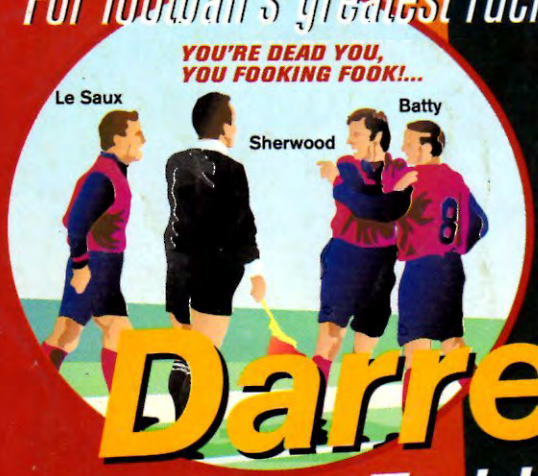

Darren Anderton

On Terry, Teddy and that move to Man Utd

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